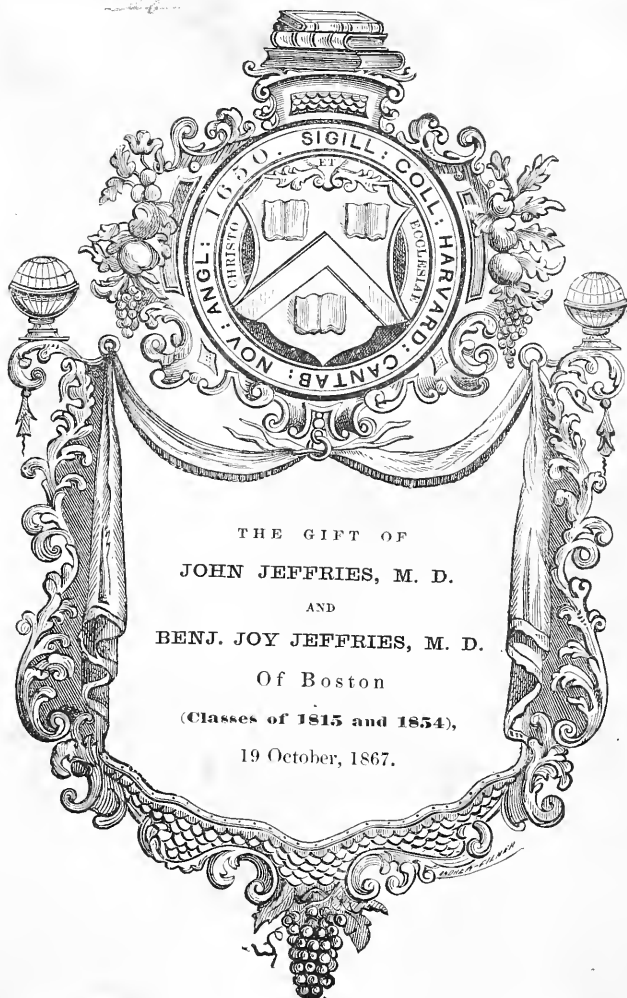
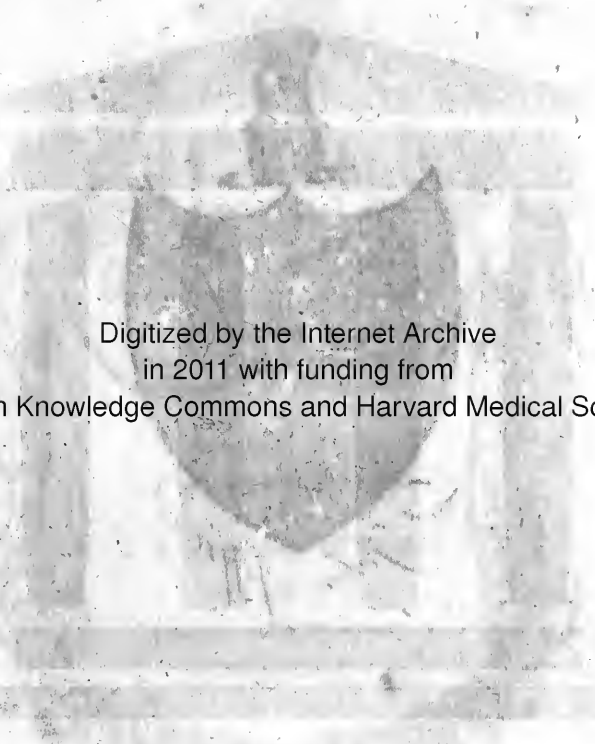


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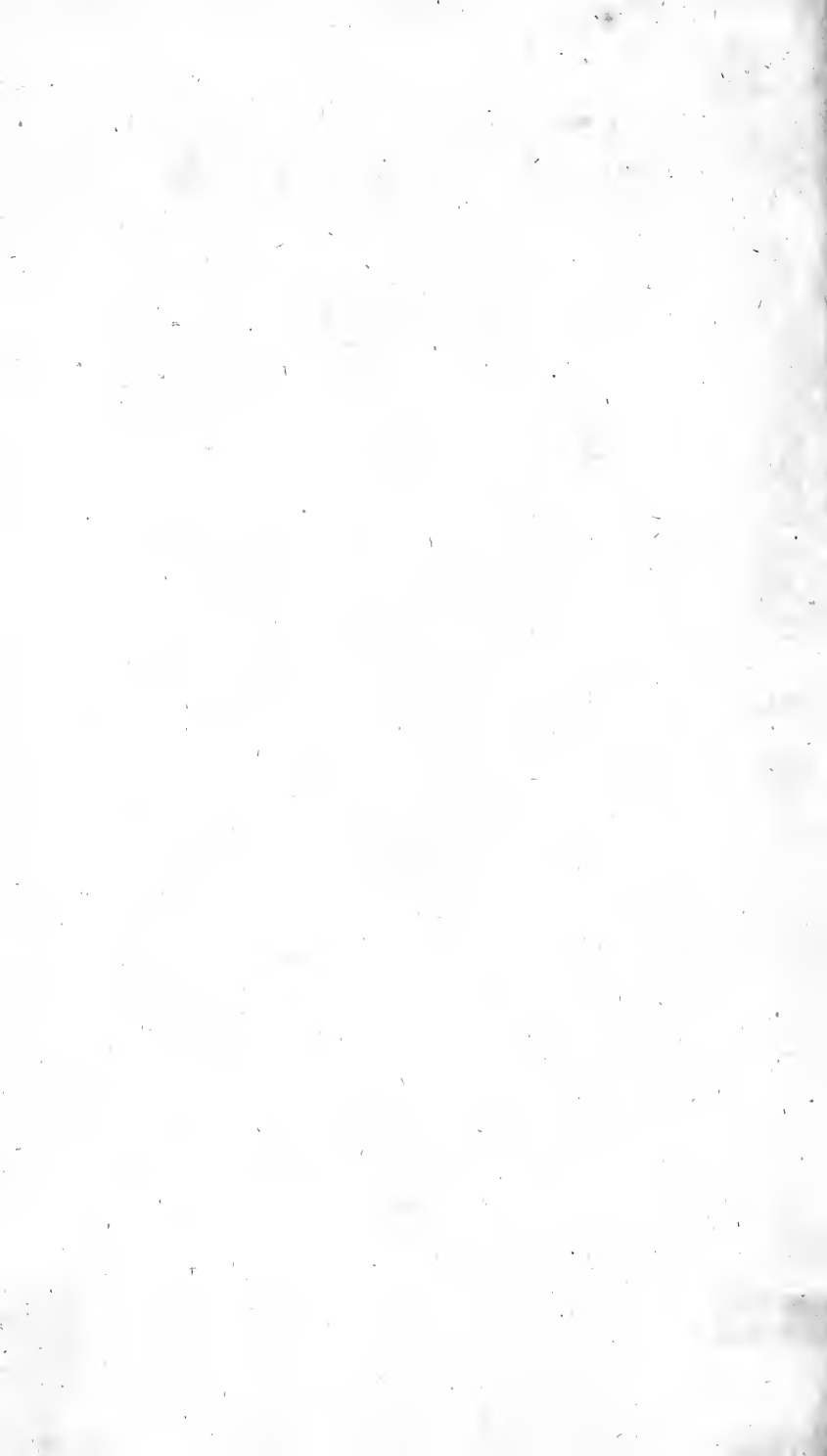
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J. Jeffries.

Hermippus Redivivus:

OR, THE

SAGE'S TRIUMPH

OVER

OLD AGE and the GRAVE.

Wherein a Method is laid down for

Prolonging the LIFE and VIGOUR of MAN.

INCLUDING

A COMMENTARY upon an Antient INSCRIPTION, in which this great SECRET is revealed; supported by numerous Authorities.

The whole Intersperfed with

A great Variety of remarkable and well attested Relations.

By Johann Heinrich Gohausen.

THE THIRD EDITION.

L O N D O N,

Printed for J. Nourse, Bookseller to His MAJESTY.

MDCCLXXI.

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of Boston.

(No. 6, 10, 15 & 1654)

THE
P R E F A C E.

IF custom had not established a sort of necessity of prefixing something of this kind to whatever is sent abroad, the following sheets might have been safely trusted without a preface. For, in the first place, this book is published not to excite, but to gratify the curiosity of the lovers of learning, who have enquired after it very diligently, and expressed a great desire to see by what arguments Dr. Cohausen endeavoured to support so extraordinary a system. And, on the other hand, again, the book itself is so methodical, and every thing therein follows so naturally, that the reader is led in a direct road from the beginning to the end; and as he is in no danger

of mistaking his way, there is the less occasion for affording him supernumerary lights in an introduction like this.

BUT, since we have undertaken to write a preface, it may not be amiss to observe therein, that very few books contain so great a variety in so narrow a compass. The author appears to be a man of great reading, and deep reflection, for most of the books he cites are equally scarce and curious; but then he does not, like many of the German authors, content himself with barely embroidering his margins, which may be sometimes done by transcribing those of other writers, but generally gives you the passages that make for his purpose, and very often characters of the authors themselves; and this alone, renders his work of great utility, to such as desire to be acquainted with the merit of books, seldom to be met with, and which, on that very account, are swelled to a high price.

ANOTHER remarkable thing in this treatise, is, the choice the author has made of his quotations, which are as entertaining as they are instructive; or is it easy to conceive,

ceive, without reading his book, how it was possible for a man to enliven so dry a subject, as his seems to be, in the manner he has done. The extracts he has given from Bacon the monk, plainly shew the prodigious knowledge of that extraordinary person, who, when all Europe was involved in the thickest mist of ignorance, seems to have possessed alone such a treasure of science, as would have rendered him a very considerable man, even in the most enlightened ages, and may possibly engage some able writer to give us such an abridgment of his works, as the ingenious and learned Dr. Shaw has done of those of chancellor Bacon, and the famous Boyle; which, if judiciously performed, and illustrated as they are, with proper notes, would do equal service to the republic of letters, and honour to our country.

THE stories he inserts of Eugenius Philalethes, Signor Gualdi, and the celebrated Flamel, are not only extremely diverting, but may contribute also to the procuring us some well-written history of the pretenders to the philosopher's stone; which, as it would be a
very

very curious and entertaining piece, so if compiled from good authorities, and handled in a proper manner, it might be of considerable use *, since the number of operators in that way has of late years mightily encreased, especially in this country, where there are many who have given themselves up to that delusive study, though they endeavour to conceal themselves, and their labours, with the utmost secrecy, in order to avoid that ridicule which generally attends the professors of the occult sciences. In Germany, however, this kind of learning is still in vogue and credit, and it is scarce possible for any one to obtain a considerable reputation as a man of letters, who has not a touch at least of chemistry.

WITH respect to the capital view of our author, in recommending that doctrine which he deduces from the inscription in the front

* Since the publication of the first edition, I have been favoured with such a history, said to be writ by a German adept, of which, perhaps, if the public shew a desire of it, they may hear more in time to come.

of his book, it is certainly managed with great skill and ingenuity, so that if the reader should at last reject its probability, he must be obliged, notwithstanding, to confess that the writer has not employed his pains to little or no purpose, but has introduced so many curious enquiries, and thrown out so many valuable hints, that his book must be allowed a performance of great merit, whatever becomes of Hermippus and his secret. Of this the author himself seems to be very well aware, and therefore while he pushes his argument with the greatest vigour, and appears evidently to have his design much at heart; he, notwithstanding, takes all along such precautions, as are necessary to defend him from the imputation of being a whimsical, conceited, or pedantic writer, as almost any other man would have been thought, who had undertaken such a task. Upon the whole, there is in this dissertation, such a mixture of serious irony, as cannot but afford a very agreeable entertainment to those who are proper judges of subjects of this kind, and who are inclined to see how far the strength of human understanding can support philosophical truths
against

against received notions, and vulgar prejudices.

HAVING thus taken the same liberty with our author, which he has done with other learned men, the whole is submitted to the judgment of the candid reader, who will, doubtless, retain some tenderness for the pains that have been taken for his amusement, and not pass a harsh censure on a piece which we may boldly say, has nothing in it dogmatical, tedious, or offensive.

Hermip-

Hermippus Redivivus:

OR, THE

Art of Preserving YOUTH.

IT was the laudable custom of the ancients, to perpetuate the memory of all signal events, and especially such as in any degree might be useful to posterity, by inscriptions. These had a peculiar stile, in which three things were principally regarded; succinctness, elegance, and clearness. It would have been inconvenient, and indeed preposterous, to have drawn such pieces into a great length, considering the places in which they were erected; that is to say, markets, temples, or public roads; or, the matter whereon they were inscribed, which was marble, or some other kind of hard or curious stone. But, if brevity was necessary, beauty was likewise expedient. Where there is nothing striking, the memory soon loses a thought. To retain what we are told, we must receive at

A

once

once both pleasure and instruction. This neatness of stile, was peculiarly cultivated by the antients. It came originally from the East, where all science was taught in parables and proverbs. In Greece, they refined upon this, and laid down the rudiments of knowledge in aphorisms. Amongst the Romans, this manner of teaching was much esteemed, and nothing more admired, even in the politeſt ages, than sentences. If they were afterwards abused, and improperly applied, this ought not to discredit them, ſince without queſtion they ever did, and always will, appear with the utmoſt propriety in that kind of writing of which I am ſpeaking. Laſtly, as to perſpicuity, the antients were exceedingly careful, and the difficulties that now ariſe about the true meaning of ſuch monuments of their learning as have reached our times, are rather owing to the miſfortune of loſing ſuch accounts of their cuſtoms and manners, as might have made them eaſy and familiar to us, than to any want of clearneſs in the ſtile of their inſcriptions.

MEN of different profeſſions have employed themſelves with different views, in the ſtudy of thoſe large and curious collections, which learned and induſtrious perſons have made of ſuch remains of antient wiſdom, as having eſcaped oblivion, are now ſafely repoſited in the cabinets of the curious. Amongſt theſe, we are chiefly obliged to the celebrated Thomas Reineſius, who undertook to make a
ſupplement

supplement to the laborious work of Gruter, and has therein preserved an infinite number of valuable inscriptions; and amongst the rest, this, which hath given occasion to my treatise.

ÆSCULAPIO ET SANITATI
L. CLODIUS. HERMIPPVS
QUI VIXIT ANNOS CXV. DIES V.
PUELLARUM ANHELITU
QUOD ETIAM POST MORTEM
EJUS
NON PARUM MIRANTUR PHYSICI
JAM POSTERI SIC VITAM DUCITE.

The learned Delechamp has given us a different account of this inscription; according to him, it should be read thus:

L. Clodius Hirpanus,
Vixit annos CLV. dies V.
Puerorum halitu refocillatus
Et educatus ^a.

THE famous Cujas gives it us in the following manner.

L. Clodius Hirpanus,
Vixit annos CXV. dies V.
Alitus puerorum anhelitu ^b.

^a In notis ad L. vii. c. 48. Plinii Natural. Hist.

^b Ad Justiniani Novel. 5.

4 HERMIPPUS REDIVIVUS; *or,*

THESE various readings, though it cannot be denied that they affect the sense strongly, do not however, much concern the subject. The first tells us, that L. Clodius Hermippus lived one hundred and fifteen years, and five days, by the breath of young women, which is worthy the consideration of physicians, and of posterity. According to the commentator upon Pliny, the name of this long-liver was not Hermippus, but Herpanus, and the date of his life one hundred and fifty-five years, and five days, with this additional circumstance, that he did not live by the breath of young women, but of young men. The lawyer again reduces the life to the former standard, and contends only, that his name was Hirpanus, and that he received this extraordinary nourishment from the breath of youths.

IF therefore we take this inscription as it stands by the consent of all these writers, it informs us of a fact equally curious and important, viz. That a certain person, no matter whether his name was Hermippus, or Hirpanus, reached a very advanced age, by the use of the breath of young women, or of young men. Now, whether this were a real fact which actually happened, or whether it be the invention of some malicious wit amongst the antients, in order to exercise the talents of posterity, I concern not myself: It appears to me in the light of a physical problem, which may be expressed in very few words, viz. Whether the breath of young women may
probably

probably contribute to the maintaining long life, and keeping off old age? This is what I propose to examine ; this is to be the subject of my discourse, in which, if what I deliver be entertaining and useful, the reader need not trouble himself much about the truth or falsehood of the inscription.

BUT it will be necessary, before we come to the strict examination of this proposition, to remove some previous difficulties out of the way. In the first place, therefore, let us enquire, whether the term of life be a fixed or moveable thing. Some of the most learned among the Jews have thought it absolutely determined by the decree of God, and have alledged various scriptures for the proof of this. ^c The most antient philosophers, both in Chaldea and Egypt, thought the life of man depended upon the stars, and by pretending to predict its duration, plainly shewed, that they thought it absolutely under the influence of the heavenly bodies ^d. The Stoics, if they meant the power of the stars, by what they stiled Fate, were also of this opinion ; but whatever they meant by Fate, most evident it is, that they thought the life of man, as well as every other thing, depended thereupon ^e ; and that consequently it was unalterable by any means, within the compass of human power. Now, if there be any truth in these

^c Manaf. ben Israel, de term. vitæ.
Hist. lib. 1. Diogen. Laert.
Diogen. Laert. Senec.

^d Diod. Sicul.
^e Plut. de placit. Philosoph.

opinions, if there be the least foundation for any one of them, the case is clear, that all farther enquiries are vain; for, to what end should we search out the most probable means of extending life, when we are certain, that this is a thing beyond our capacity? or at least, uncertain whether it be or not?

IN order to open the way to further speculations upon this curious and important subject, I will begin with the solution of this difficulty, and take upon me to prove, that, contrary to the notions of these divines and philosophers, there is no such thing, as a settled term of life by the law of nature; or, which is the same thing in other words, by the express will of divine providence. In the first place, I lay it down as an absolute certainty, that contingency is essential to that mode of rule pursued by the divine power, in the management of sublunary things. Causes indeed necessarily draw after them their effects; but then I deny that there is any chain of necessary causes; and because it would require much time and space to establish this doctrine generally, I will keep close to my subject, and content myself with proving it, as to this particular point. It is a thing agreed on all hands, that the law of Moses propounded chiefly temporal blessings, and amongst these, long life; now this is absolutely incompatible with the doctrine of a fixed term, and therefore, if there be any passages in the scripture which look this way, we must interpret
them

them in some other sense, for the part must accord with the whole, and it is idle to alledge a few detached passages against the scheme of the whole book. Again we are told, that God commended Solomon for praying to him for wisdom, rather than long life, or for riches, which plainly shews, that he might as well have asked for either, as for it; but if this inference displeases, take the express decision of God thereupon; who, in the same place, says, that if Solomon walked in the ways of David his father, he would lengthen his days ^f. Add to these arguments, that it was the constant practice of the best men, and such as most intimately knew the will of God, to pray in terms irreconcilable to such an absolute decree. Thus Hezekiah desired that his life might be spared ^g. Elias ^h and Jonah ⁱ, that theirs might be shortened.

BUT, to put the matter out of doubt, one need only consider the choice given to David, by the prophet Nathan ^k, of war, pestilence, or famine, in consequence of which, he chose pestilence; now, if there had been a fixed time of life, how could this choice have possibly taken place? All the persons who died of the pestilence, must, according to the doctrine I am refuting, have died if there had been no pestilence, because the decreed term of their lives was expired. On the whole, therefore, it is apparent,

^f 1 Kings iii. 11, 14. ^g Isaiah xxxviii. 3. ^h 1 Kings xix. 4. ⁱ Jonah iv. 3. ^k 11 Samuel xxiv. 13.

that a fixed term of life is inconsistent with the reason of things, which is what we call the law of nature, wherein, if I may be allowed the expression, there is a settled contingency. It is contrary to the principles of religion, as deducible from the natural light of our understandings, and it is directly contrary to revelation ; so that I take it for granted, that the most pious man in the world, that will seriously consider these arguments, must remain satisfied, that the order of providence, the will of heaven, or God's decree, which are the terms used by the divines on this subject, hath determined nothing absolutely, concerning the term of life.

I AM next to speak of the opinions of the astrologers, which of old, were ascribed to Æsculapius, who, it is said, laid down this maxim, That all things below were governed by the motions and aspects of the stars. Against this notion I have two things to offer ; the first is, that they could not possibly know this so to be, even granting it should be true ; because they were absolutely ignorant of the true system of the heavens, and of the motions of those bodies, whence they would derive so great a power. This puts their authority out of the case ; for if we cannot depend upon them as astronomers, nothing in nature can be more ridiculous than to pretend to lay any stress on their judgment in astrology. To be convinced of this, we need only consult the authentic accounts we have in antient authors of the
Chaldaic

Chaldaic system¹; from whence it appears to be equally false and absurd; false, as it is repugnant to the experience and observation of succeeding times; and absurd, as it is contrary to the unalterable principles of reason and true science. The other argument I alledge, is this; That since the authority of the antients is out of the case, if there be any modern Stoics, who are still of this opinion, they must shew us the grounds of it, and this not from such chimerical notions as are laid down by the pretended sages in judiciary astrology, but from the settled and unquestioned principles of true philosophy. When they do this, or, at least, when they attempt to do it, it will be time enough to examine how far this new system of theirs is rational. In the mean time, I will conclude this point with that settled and most reasonable maxim of the civil law, “That about things which are not, and about things which cannot be made appear, there is the same reason;” that is, there can be no reasoning about them, they must be considered in the same light, since nothing can be more idle, than to dispute about the consequences of a thing, before the thing is made manifest, or we have any real ground for a dispute.

WE have now done somewhat towards establishing the foundation of our doctrine; but there is still another vulgar notion in our way, which must be

¹ Diod. Sicul. lib. i. Stanley's Chaldaic Philosophy.

removed ; or, to speak more properly, explained. By this, I mean the prevailing opinion that the life of man is limited to a certain term, and because we see people grow old at a certain age, by which I mean, grow infirm and decrepit ; for oldness has not so much reference to time, as to condition ; and I account him old who has lost his strength, rather than one who is advanced in years. But, because I say the maladies that attend old age, come on in most people at a certain period, they are held to be necessary ; and if there were any truth in this, we should be stopped again ; here would be a new barrier, through which we should be able to find no passage ; and when we talked of retarding old age, people would expect we should make them young again. It is requisite, therefore, that this matter be explained, and set right, and that the reader be satisfied how far the incommodities of old age are of necessity, and how far the product of natural causes, which may be affected by the skill and art of man.

THE human body is a machine, actuated by an immortal spirit, and, which is more to my purpose, fabricated by an almighty hand. It cannot be supposed, that this dwelling should be so slightly, or so injudiciously contrived, as that it should wear out in a very short space of time. This does not seem very agreeable, either to the nature of man, considered as a rational creature, or with that infinite skill and wisdom which is evident in the composition
of

of the human frame. When therefore the divines say, that Sin introduces Death, they seem to speak philosophically ; and if I may be allowed to explain their meaning, I should be inclined to say, that diseases and death are not incident to the human body by the will of God, or, which is the same thing, by the law of nature, but were superinduced by the follies and vices of men, which carry in them naturally the seeds of death ; and therefore, if it be an evil, we ought not to accuse providence, but ourselves. Yet I will readily acknowledge, that taking things as they now stand, and have stood for many ages past, there is no hope left of immortality in this body, or even of prolonging our lives to three or five hundred years ; but still I affirm, that there are no settled periods in nature, no inevitable laws which conjoin weakness and infirmity with a certain number of years ; but that it is very possible, nay, and very practicable too, for a man to extend the length of his life, much beyond the common date, and that without feeling the incommodities of age, for otherwise, this would rather be avoiding death, than preserving life.

To prove this, I shall first make use of reason, and next of experience : I shall make it evident by arguments, that it may, and by instances, that it has been so ; and then if any sceptic has a mind to doubt the truth of my doctrine, I shall leave him in his own road, where his ignorance will infallibly bring upon him the just punishment of his obstinacy,

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an hastier extinction of life than he need otherwise have suffered.

ALL wise men have agreed that nature, by which I mean the wisdom of God, manifested in the order of all things, acts uniformly in every respect, and assigns proper periods to all things. Solomon says, "There is a time to be born, and a time to die ^m;" a short maxim, which may admit of a long commentary. The life of man does not certainly consist in eating and drinking, in waking or sleeping, or in the indulging by turns the gratification of his many appetites; for if this was so, the usual term of life would certainly be long enough, and there have been actually instances of people who have been so satiated with the round of these trivial actions, as to be weary of life before death was at hand, and in consequence of this weariness have hastened it. But as the divine old man justly observes, "Art is long, and life is short ⁿ"; that is, there seems to be no just proportion between the powers of the mind, and the force of the body. We hurry on from infancy to childhood; from childhood to the age of man; from thence, to what is stiled middle-aged, and then we decline apace into feebleness, misery, and dotage. Can any man think that this is the true order of nature? Has nature given so many years to pikes, to eagles,

^m Eccles. iii. 2. ⁿ Vita brevis, ars longa, occasio celeris, experimentum periculosum, judicium difficile. Hippocrat. Aphorism. I.

and to fags, nay, and to serpents, at the same time that she denies it to man? Be it far from us to believe this; let us rather stifle our pride and conceit-
edness, and believe that the shortness of life flows from the weakness and wickedness of man.

BUT it will be said, that death is not barely the end of diseases, but that old age is as much a disease as any other, and certainly brings it on. That the human frame is so constituted as not only to encrease and arrive at perfection, but to decay also, and wear out. That the flame of life grows after a certain time weaker and weaker; that the solids lose their tone by degrees, and that the vessels grow cartilaginous, and become at last boney; so that death, by old age, is a natural thing°. Be it so, I am not contending that men may live for ever, or that they may live, as I said before, three or five hundred years; but this I say, that old age is the only disease to which we are subject by nature; and that from this, it is very possible men may be much longer defended than they usually are by the help of art. This I say, principally on the grounds I have before laid down, viz. That the human body is a machine admirably contrived; from whence I infer that it may, with due care, be kept in good order, and that the true ends of life, being such as require a much greater extent of time than the

° Boerhaave Institut. Medic. § 474, 475, 1053, 1054.

ordinary period of life allows ; therefore it is more likely, that this unreasonable brevity should be the effect of our want of skill, of care, or of attention, than owing to any law laid down by the omniscient author of all things. These are my principles, which I submit to the strictest examination ; if they can be demonstrated to be either false or precarious, I shall be sorry for myself, and for mankind ; since undoubtedly they carry in them a strong appearance of truth, and of the most pleasing kind of truth, that which attributes glory to God, by displaying his good will to man. But lest any one should say, that many things look fair in speculation which deceive us in the practice, I will, after thus exposing my doctrines to the ray of reason, examine it next by the reflected light of experience ; and surely, if this shews us no flaws in it, the reader and I shall proceed chearfully on our journey, and he will no longer consider me as one amusing him with a learned paradox, but as the unfolders of a great and useful truth.

AGAINST the common opinion, the most authentic records of history enable me to alledge, that though vulgar experience be opposite to my notions, yet that shortness of human life, which is now become common, was not so always, nor is yet so in all places. I shall not dwell long on what is said of the great age of the antediluvian patriarchs, I shall content myself only with a few observations
that

that are necessary to my purpose, the truth of which cannot be drawn into dispute. In the first place, let it be noted, that though men lived to be then very old, yet the species was new. The human body had been but lately taken out of the earth by its creator, and retained therefore a great deal of its primitive strength. We say commonly, in our days, that a man who lives fast takes pains to destroy his constitution ; and on the principles of Moses, we cannot but allow that the fabric of Adam's body must have been much stronger, and better compacted than ours ; and this it was that preserved him so long after he had lost that tree of life, or rule of living, which was suited to his primitive state. My second observation is, that these patriarchs lived in another world ; I mean a world otherwise constituted than ours, and after another manner ; and therefore what we are told of their age, is not more incredible than a multitude of facts which experience and evidence oblige us to believe true ^P. I thirdly observe, that if with stronger constitutions, and in a better disposed world, men lived to various ages, but most of them nine or ten times as long as we, there seems to be no repugnancy in admitting, that by great care of our constitutions, and our helping by art the noxious qualities of the several elements as they are now disposed, men may maintain as great a relative distinction in the periods of their lives or deaths.

^P Burnet Theor. Tellur. Cudworth System. Intellect.

It is very remarkable, that not only the sacred writers, but all the antient Chaldean, Egyptian, and Chinese authors, speak of the great ages of such as lived in early times, and this with such confidence, that Xenophon, Pliny, and other judicious persons, receive their testimony without scruple. But to come down to later times; Attila, king of the Huns, who reigned in the fifth century, lived to 124, and then died of excess the first night of his second nuptials, with one of the most beautiful princesses of that age ^a. Piaſtus, king of Poland, who, from the rank of a peasant, was raised to that of a prince in the year 824, lived to be 120, and governed his subjects with such ability to the very last, that his name is still in the highest veneration amongst his countrymen ^r. Marcus Valerius Corvinus, a Roman consul was celebrated as a true patriot, and a most excellent person in private life, by the elder Cato, and yet Corvinus was then upwards of an hundred ^s. Hippocrates, the best of physicians, lived to an hundred and four ^t: but Asclepiades, a Persian physician, reached 150 ^u. Galen lived in undisturbed health to 104 ^v. These men do honour to their profession.

^a Priscus apud Jornandes. Bonfinius, Histoire de Hongrie, Decade premiere, l. ii. p. 75. ^r Guagnini Rerum Polon. p. 64. Herbert de Fulſtin, lib. i. p. 13. & Harchnoch, lib. i. cap. 2. p. 68, &c. ^s Cato de Re Rustica, Cicer. de Senectut. Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. ^t Euseb. Chronic. Petav. Rationar. Tempor. Tom. i. p. 96. ^u Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 14. ^v Fulgos. lib. viii. c. 14. p. 1096.

Sophocles, the tragic poet, lived to 130^x. Democritus, the philosopher lived to 104^y; and Euphranor taught his scholars at upwards of 100^z: and yet, what are these to Epimenides of Crete? who, according to Theopomus, an unblemished historian, lived to upwards of 157^a. I mention these, because if there be any truth or security in history, we may rely as firmly on the facts recorded of them, as on any facts whatever; and consequently we have the strongest assurance, that even an hundred, or an hundred and twenty, is not the utmost limit of human life.

BUT what is still more to our purpose, it is not this, or that country, in which such aged persons are to be found; we meet with them in many, I was going to say in most climates. We have it on good authority, that in Bengal there lived a certain peasant, who reached the age of 335; and having received alms of many infidel princes, had his pension continued to him by the Portuguese^b in Cambaja. Pliny gives us an account that, in the city of Parma, there were found two of 130 years of age, three of 120, at a certain taxation, or rather visitation, and in many cities of Italy, people much older, particu-

^x Euseb. Chronic. ^y Petav. Rationar. Tempor. Tom. i. p. 96. ^z Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 14. ^a Diogen. Laert. in vit. Epimen. ^b Barthol. Hist. Annat. Cent. v. Hist. 28. p. 46.

larly at Ariminum, one Marcus Apponius, who was 150^c. Vincent Coquelin, a clergyman, died at Paris in 1664, at 112^d. Lawrence Hutland lived in the Orkneys to 170^e. James Sands, an Englishman, towards the latter end of the last century, died at 140, and his wife at 120^f. In Sweden, it is a common thing to meet with people of above an hundred; and Rudbekius affirms, from bills of mortality, signed by his brother, who was a bishop, that in the small extent of twelve parishes, there died in the space of thirty-seven years 232 men, between 100 and 140 years of age^g; which is the more credible, since in the diet, assembled by the late queen of Sweden in 1713, the boldest and best speaker among the deputies, from the order of peasants, was considerably above an hundred^h. These accounts, however, are far short of what might be produced from Africa, and North America. But I confine myself to such relations as are truly authentic, and I assemble these instances not to shew my own learning, or to gratify my reader's curiosity, but with a view to satisfy him, that as the fact is certain, men may far transcend what are esteemed the common bounds of life, so this blessing of longevity is not confined to one climate or region, and therefore we

^c Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 29. ^d Memoirs de Paris, p. 197. ^e Buchan. Hist. Scot. ^f Hakewill's Apol. lib. iii. c. 1. p. 166. ^g Ol. Rudbeck. Atlantic. p. 396. ^h Memoirs. Histor. 1713. Tom. ii. p. 336.

need not despair of finding out the art of prolonging life, and keeping off the decays of old age in any country.

It is true there are countries the climates of which are so wonderfully healthy, as to extend human life to what is thought a very extraordinary degree, as for instance; in the countries beyond the British settlements in Florida, there died, about twenty years ago, an Indian prince who had the full use of his faculties to the last, and of his limbs also, to within a few years of his death, who remembered the coming of the Spaniards into those parts, and consequently must have been rather over than under two hundred years old. We have this account indeed from the Indians; but this does not at all lessen its credibility, for they are people of such veracity as not to have any word in their language which signifies a lie, and finding themselves often imposed upon by the Europeans, since they came to have an intercourse with them, they have introduced a very singular phrase, to express at once their conception, and their contempt of falsehood; for when they have detected a man in telling untruths, they say that such a one misuses speechⁱ. They mean by this, that he prostitutes the faculty God has given him of expressing things as they are, by expressing them as they are not, and consequently I think the relations

ⁱ Our author had this from a gentleman of Saltzburgh, who went over to these countries.

of such people may be safely depended upon; nor should I scruple to pay the same faith to their traditions, as to facts, that I would even to the best histories.

BUT for the sake of those who prefer the writings of the antients to all other authorities, I shall take notice of the island of Cea, one of the Cyclades, now called Zia, the air of which was so wholesome, that it was in danger of being over peopled; and therefore, as Strabo tells us, the inhabitants had a law amongst them, that such as had survived the age of threescore were obliged to drink hemlock juice to destroy themselves ^k. The material part of this strange story is confirmed to us by what we find related in other antient authors, particularly Heraclides and Ælian, whose authorities are cited at the bottom of the page ^l. But from comparing these
together,

^k Strabo, lib. x. p. 335. “A law seems to have been established among this people, which the comic poet Menander applauds in the following lines :

“The Cean laws a right decision give,

“Who can’t live happy shall no longer live.

“By their constitution it seems that such as outlived sixty were obliged to drink the juice of hemlock, that those they left behind them might not be straitened for provisions.” Such were the sentiments of this learned historian, who, notwithstanding expresses himself with a great deal of modesty, and does not endeavour to impose his own conjecture upon his readers, for an incontestable fact.

^l Heraclides de Politicis, p. m. 20. “So very wholesome is the air of this island, that both men and women might attain

together, a doubt arises whether this practice of the old people in Cea was grounded on an edict made by the government, or was simply one of those customs which, being once united to the ideas of greatness of soul, have almost the same obedience paid to them as legal ordinances. The reader may have seen that Strabo imagined, that there was a law by which all persons turned of threescore were commanded to put themselves to death. But he very probably might be mistaken, for since the air of this island was very healthy, and the inhabitants long-lived, the government, by enacting and enforcing

“ there to extreme old age ; but the latter more especially decline this advantage ; and that before they are reached by age, and its concomitant infirmities, by taking a draught of the juice of poppy, or of hemlock, put an end to their lives.” *Ælian. var. hist. lib. iii. cap. 37.* “ It is a custom amongst the Cceans, that those who are drawing towards old age, either at some splendid entertainment, or when they meet together at a solemn sacrifice, drink the juice of hemlock, from a sense that they might otherwise become useless and burthen some to their country, when afflicted with the infirmities incident to the decline of life.” It is a little strange, that neither Tournefort, nor other modern authors, who have given us large descriptions of the island of Zia, and affect to adorn their writings with quotations from the antients, take any notice either of the present purity of the air, or of this odd custom among its antient inhabitants. Yet in their writings we met with a kind of confirmation of it, since they tell us, that from the prodigious quantity of ruins it plainly appears, that in old times this country was exceedingly populous : from whence it is asserted that this law became necessary, or rather this practice came into use.

such a law would have deprived itself of several vigorous and robust subjects, who might be able to do their country farther service, if, as he suggests, the law had constrained indiscriminately all persons who had attained to the age of threescore and one, to poison themselves. We may observe that Heraclides's words seem to imply a spontaneous, much rather than a binding law. We may also observe, that Ælian's words clearly intimate decrepid persons, and not all such as had attained the age of sixty-one. All this tends very strongly to refute Strabo's opinion. But granting it to be true, we at least might shew that this edict of the island of Cea did not subsist in Tiberius's time. The proof which Valerius Maximus gives of this, may greatly contribute to discover the true state of the affair in question, for which reason it may be proper to weigh well in this place, the circumstances of that author's narrative.

HE relates, that going into Asia with Sextus Pompeius ^m, and passing by the city of Julis, he was present at the death of a lady, aged about ninety. She had declared to her superiors the reason which induced her to quit the world; and after this, she

^m Valer. Max. lib. ii. cap. 6. no. 8. in exter. whose authority is the greater from his being, as he tells us, an eye-witness. It is this that gives us certainty, not only as to all the little circumstances attending this strange affair; but as to every word the lady is reported to have said; which would not have been the case if we had met with this in the ordinary course of history.

prepared to swallow down the poison ; and imagining that the presence of Pompey would do great honour to the ceremony, she most humbly besought him to come thither on that occasion. He granted her request, and exhorted her very eloquently, and with the utmost earnestness to live. However, this was to no purpose ; she thanked him for his kind wishes, and besought the gods to reward him, not so much those she was going to, as those she was quitting. “ I have hitherto, said she, experienced only
“ the smiles of fortune, and that by an ill grounded
“ fondness for life I may not run the hazard of
“ seeing that goddess change her countenance to-
“ wards me, I voluntarily quit the light, while yet
“ I take pleasure in beholding it, leaving behind
“ me two daughters, and seven grand-sons, to re-
“ spect my memory.” She then turned about to her family, and exhorted them to live in peace and unity, and having recommended the care of her household, and the worship of her domestic deities to her elder daughter, she, with a steady hand, took the glass that was filled with poison. When she had it, she addressed her prayer to Mercury ⁿ, and
having

ⁿ It deserves some attention, that this lady who thus disposed of her own life, thought it no crime against the gods ; on the contrary, she recommends herself to the care of Mercury, who, she hoped, would usher her to the most delightful part of Hades ; yet Virgil tells us, Those had but a bad reception in the other world, who went thither of their own accord. But as

having besought him to facilitate her passage to the better part of the receptacle of departed spirits, she, with wonderful alacrity, drank off the deadly draught. When this was done, with the same composure and steadiness of mind, she signified in what manner the poison wrought; how the lower parts of her body became cold and senseless by degrees, and when the noble parts began to feel the infection, she called her daughter to do the last office, by closing her eyes. As for us, says Valerius, who were almost stupified at the sight of so strange a spectacle, she dismissed us with weeping eyes. For the Romans thought compassion no way incompatible with fortitude.

THE same author acquaints us, that what was in some measure an effect of necessity at Cea, became from other reasons a custom at Marseilles^o; where, as he delivers to us, from his own knowledge, the magistrates kept constantly, in their own custody, an efficacious poison, which none were allowed to use, till, by a memorial setting forth the reasons which inclined them to quit the world, they obtained the permission of the senate of this city, which consisted of six hundred, to make use of this method of leaving the light of the sun behind them. Upon

to christians the law is clear, we are to preserve life, because it is the gift of God, and we can never think it intupportable, till he is pleased to take it from us.

^o Id. *ibid.*

their

their presenting such a petition, the senate examined their reasons with such an equal temper or medium, as neither indulged a rash passion for dying, or opposed a just desire of quitting this earthly stage ; whether such persons wanted to free themselves from the persecutions of ill fortune, or were not willing to run the hazard of losing, in case they had enjoyed them, good fortune's smiles. Such was this senate's rule ; they did not pretend to constrain any person to poison themselves, but then they gave them the liberty to do this, if they would, whenever they judged it proper. Consequently, no one could kill himself in due form, and according to law, in those days at Marseilles, unless the government had first permitted him by a public approbation, founded on the perusal and serious consideration of the motives inducing him to such an action. If this was a proper place, many curious remarks might be made upon this custom ; but it is more to our purpose to shew what relation it bears to the subject we are treating.

WE find that in almost all ages and countries a spirit of despair and dissatisfaction has more or less prevailed, and taught people to anticipate what others think comes too soon of itself. To these furious and frantic mortals there are roads enough open to escape from life ; and shall we believe that there are none by which we may avoid death for a time ? To desire this, flows from a principle of nature ; to
seek

seek dissolution, is the effects of a depravity of reason. What is of no value is in every body's way ; the most contemptible fool, the lunatic farthest out of the reach of cure, the malefactor whom a sense of his crimes, or the fears of punishment, have driven to the brink of distraction ; all have this remedy in their power, and may fly to death when they will ^P.

But

^P Our author, in some respects, resembles Seneca ; he just flashes a hint, and leaves his reader to convince himself by reflection. There are many ways to die, and these are in the power of all. But how does this prove that the continuance of life is so great a blessing ? Because, as he gives us to understand, nature is not lavish of her more precious gifts. It is in every man's power to gratify his senses, and so lead the life of a voluptuary, but to arrive at virtue and wisdom is not a thing of such facility. We have indeed the means of doing this, but reasoning, attention, circumspection, must be employed, in order to compass this end. It is not possible to conceive an idea of excellence attainable without action and perseverance ; and therefore whatever can be so easily attained, has not any title to excellence. The rage of dying seems as much a kind of madness, as the desire of living, when the will of God is otherwise, is weakness. But common-sense teaches us that long life is a blessing, and revelation proposes it as a reward. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, lived long ; the increase of Job's days is attributed to a special providence ; Solomon was promised long life on certain terms ; Hezekiah was reprieved for fifteen years, in regard to his piety ; and the good deeds of Tobias and Tobit lengthened their days. Under the christian dispensation it may be observed, that eternal happiness is signified by the phrase of Life, and eternal misery is stiled Death ; the apostles and disciples of Jesus were jealous of his promise to John, suspecting it to be an exceeding long life ; and indeed this favourite apostle
actually

But one would imagine that to extend the thread of life, to protract our journey to the grave, and instead of a short winter night, to substitute a long summer's evening, to the day of our existence here, is not so easy. We ought from hence to think it deserves our regard the more, since the discovery would be surprising, and not only prolong our days, but immortalize our memories. We hear indeed many make slight of this, but it arises from a false magnanimity, from a fond and foolish notion of shewing a contempt for that which at the bottom is dearest to us all. Besides, in full health we are apt to deceive ourselves, and to fancy such researches not vain only, but needless; we are then in the pursuit of pleasure; but when we can proceed no farther, when we are far advanced in years, or the vigour of our age is hastily spent, we are too apt to reflect and to regret; we languish then for what ought to have occupied our cares before, and wish to continue drinking, though it be but the dregs of life, and those imbibed too with the remembrance of draughts that had a higher relish. Let us own then, that it would be both wiser and better to sift this question in due time, while we have yet abilities sufficient to discover what are the rules requisite to the preservation of life, and strength

actually enjoyed a very serene and chearful old age, having survived his companions, and the first persecutions of the church, in which most of them fell.

enough

enough to come up to those rules, and thereby avoid those evils that make even life itself a burthen ¹. The owner of a house well situated, elegantly furnished, and affording variety of prospects that please the eye, and cheer the mind, is always intent upon keeping it in repair, and does not put off or delay sending for masons and carpenters, till it is on the very point of tumbling about his ears. He knows that all things will decay in time, but he knows that industry and art may make it a long time first, and therefore by wise precautions he strengthens one weak place, supports another, and removes that pressure that might endanger a third; by this means, with little labour, and without any

¹ This is a very judicious and seasonable admonition. It is in the flower of one's age that those precautions must be taken, that keep off the infirmities which usually attend us in our advanced years; for if we stay till we begin to feel such infirmities, we have lost the season of preventing, and are fallen under the necessity of having recourse to the physician, whose remedies may indeed relieve some of the symptoms for a short time, but can never defend us long from those inconveniences that attend a second childhood. Our author's similitude is a very good one, and may serve to teach us that it is too late to think of preserving our eyes, our teeth, or the sense of hearing, when they begin to be impaired; we should rather inquire how this may be done, while the organs are perfectly sound, because to preserve a thing as it is, implies a co-operation with nature; but to restore what is perished or decayed, is sometimes beyond her power, and frequently beyond ours. There is nothing surprising in this rule; but we must remember the plainest truths are the most useful.

clutter,

clutter, he keeps things in tolerable order, and lives in it with ease and decency till such time as his lease expires, and even then quits his tenement in no rotten or despicable condition.

IT may perhaps, notwithstanding all I have said, be suggested, that in such a case as this, which concerned mankind in general so much, and in which every man would naturally think himself so highly interested, if the thing were at all possible, this art must have been long ago found out, especially, since in all ages there have been a race of men, viz. physicians, whose business it particularly was to study such discoveries. To this I answer, that such prejudices as these are the greatest bars to science; that many useful arts are but of late invention; and that if this was discovered heretofore, it might be concealed from posterity for many political reasons. But besides, the fact is quite the contrary; this art was studiously sought by the antients, and some of them are said to have discovered it. Asclepiades the Persian, whom I have mentioned already, was wont to declare, he looked upon a physician as ignorant of his profession, who could not defend himself from diseases; and this notion he supported by his own example, having lived in the full enjoyment of health 150 years, and was then unfortunately killed by a fall down stairs^r. Mithridates, king of Pontus, pretended also to this secret, and so did

^r Sab. bel. lib. x. c. 8. p. 69.

many others. But the best answer that can be given to all scruples of this kind, may be found in the following passage from the learned Bacon, a famous English monk, who lived in the 13th century, who discourses thus upon the subject.

“THAT it is possible to prolong life, says he,
 “ may be thus made evident. By nature man is
 “ immortal, that is to say, was so formed originally,
 “ as that he might have escaped dying; and, even
 “ after he had sinned, he could live a thousand
 “ years; in process of time, by little and little, the
 “ length of his life was abbreviated. Therefore it
 “ must needs be, that this abbreviation is acciden-
 “ tal, and may consequently be either wholly re-
 “ paired, or at least in part. For if we would but
 “ make enquiry into the accidental cause of this
 “ corruption, we should find it neither from heaven,
 “ nor from ought but want of a regimen of health.
 “ For in as much as the fathers are corrupt, they
 “ beget children of a corrupt complexion and com-
 “ position; and their children, from the same cause,
 “ are corrupt themselves, and so corruption is de-
 “ rived from father to son, till abbreviation of life
 “ prevails by succession. Yet for all this, it does
 “ not follow that it shall always be cut shorter and
 “ shorter, because a term is a set in human kind,
 “ that men should at the most of their years arrive
 “ at fourscore; but more is their regimen, which
 “ consists in these things, meat and drink, sleep and
 “ waking,

“ waking, motion, and rest, evacuation and retention, air, and the passions of the mind. For if a man would observe this regimen from his nativity, he might live as long as his nature assumed from his parents would permit, and might be led to the utmost term of nature, lapsed from original righteousness; which term, nevertheless, he could not pass; because this regimen does not avail in the least against the old corruption of our parents. But it being in a manner impossible, that a man should be so governed in the mediocrity of these things, as this regimen of health requires, it must of necessity be, that abbreviation of life came from this cause, and not from the corruption of our parents only.

“ Now the art of physic determines this regimen sufficiently. But we find not either rich or poor, either wise men or fools, or physicians themselves, how skilful soever, are able to perfect this regimen, either in themselves or others, as is clear to every man. But nature is not deficient in necessities, nor is art compleat; yea, it is able to resist and break through all accidental passions, so as they may be destroyed, either altogether, or in part. And in the beginning, when men's age began to decline, the remedy had been easy; but now, after more than five thousand years, it is difficult to assign a remedy.

“ NEVER-

“NEVERTHELESS, wise men being moved from
“ the aforesaid considerations, have endeavoured to
“ think of some ways, not only against the defect
“ of every man’s proper regimen, but against the
“ corruption of our parents. Not that a man can
“ be preserved to the life of Adam, or Artephius,
“ because of prevailing corruption : But, that life
“ may be prolonged a century of years, or more,
“ beyond the common age of men now living, in
“ that the infirmities of old age might be retarded ;
“ and if they could not altogether be hindered, they
“ might be mitigated, that life might usefully be
“ prolonged, yet always on this side, the utmost
“ term of nature. For the utmost term of nature
“ is that which was placed in the first man after
“ sin, and there is another term from the corruption
“ of every one’s own parents.

“IT is no man’s lot to pass beyond both these
“ terms, but one may very possibly overcome the
“ term of his proper corruption. Nor yet do I be-
“ lieve that any man, how wise soever, can attain
“ the first term, though there be the same possibi-
“ lity and aptitude of human nature, to that term
“ which was in the first man. Nor is it a wonder,
“ since this aptitude extends itself to immortality, as
“ it was before sin, and will be after the resurrection.
“ But if you say that neither Aristotle nor Plato,
“ nor Hippocrates, nor Galen, arrived at such pro-
“ longation : I answer you, nor at many mean
truths,

“ truths, which were after known to other students;
“ and therefore they might be ignorant of these
“ great things, although they made their attempt.
“ But they busied themselves too much in other
“ things, and they were quickly brought to old
“ age, while they spent their lives in worse and
“ common things, before they perceived the ways
“ to the greatest of secrets. For we know that
“ Aristotle saith in his predicaments, that the qua-
“ drature of the circle is possible, but not then
“ known. And he confesses, that all men were
“ ignorant of it even to his time. But we know,
“ that in these our days this truth is known; and
“ therefore well might Aristotle be ignorant of far
“ deeper secrets of nature. Now also, wise men
“ are ignorant of many things, which in time to
“ come, every common student shall know. There-
“ fore this objection is every way vain.”

SUCH were the sentiments of this very great and very knowing man, in times of the deepest ignorance and darkest obscurity; and so thoroughly was he fixed in these notions, and had attained so many lights from the study of the Arabian writers, or rather of the Greek physicians labours, digested into the language of that nation, that he afterwards wrote an express treatise on this subject¹, of which

^s Roger. Bacon. De Vigore Artis & Naturæ.

ⁱ De Prolongatione Vitæ, &c.

I shall have frequent occasion to speak, and therein suggested many admirable precautions for the preservation of life, and avoiding the infirmities of old age. It is then certain, at least, that we are not pursuing a shadow, or engaged in a close search after an empty chimera; there may be such a thing as the art we would reach, and it is not impossible, that the method suggested to us by the Roman inscription may be the great secret. In order to discern the truth of this, or to speak more correctly, in order to discover how much of truth there is in it, we ought first of all to examine carefully the nature of human breath, what force it has, and what mighty feats may be expected from it, since the inscription tells us the long-lived Hermippus owed his vivacity to the nourishment he received from the breath of girls, or if we take in the various readings of the inscription to the breath of young people of either, or of both sexes.

IN order to come to a thorough knowledge of this matter, we must consider first what the breath is, and we shall soon learn, that as man lives by breath, so that breath is nothing more than air drawn in, and after passing through the lungs, thrown off again, that we may draw in fresh. I do not tie myself here to physical terms, or affect a technical manner of speaking; the subject on which I write is of general concern, and I would therefore express myself in a language that may be generally understood.

This

This air, when received into our bodies, according to some physicians, nourishes the lamp of life; but according to all, causes the circulation of the blood, and other juices, upon which health and life depend. On the other side, the air that we respire, and which we commonly call the breath, must, by passing through the lungs, be strongly tinged with the particles of that body, through which it has passed, and when it mixes again with the atmosphere, must communicate certain qualities which the air had not before. This is so reasonable, and at the same time so self-evident, that I think it cannot be denied. From hence it follows, that where there are many people in one room, the air that is common to them all, must be strongly impregnated with their breath. If therefore an old man be for many hours surrounded with young people, we cannot help perceiving that he must take in a great quantity of that air which they have respired, and which consequently must be loaded with those particles which it carried off in passing through their lungs.

To judge the better of this matter, let us consider first the action of odours in general upon the human body; and with regard to this, a very cautious writer, the Hippocrates of our age, and who will be esteemed the father of modern physic by posterity, after having explained wherein the odour of plants consists, and how exalted, he then discourses thus,

“ Hence we may understand, that the various, pe-
 “ culiar, and often surprising virtue of plants, may
 “ be widely diffused through the air, and carried to
 “ a vast distance by the winds, so that we must not
 “ presently account as fables, what we find related
 “ in the history of plants, concerning the surprising
 “ effects of effluvia. The shade of the walnut gives
 “ the head-ach, and makes the body costive. The
 “ effluvia of the poppy procure sleep. The vapour
 “ of the yew is reputed mortal to those who sleep
 “ under it; and the smell of bean blossoms, if
 “ long continued, disorders the senses. The strong
 “ action of the sun upon plants certainly raises at-
 “ mospheres of great efficacy, by means of the spi-
 “ rits it diffuses; and the motions of the winds
 “ carry them to a great distance. The dark shades
 “ of thick woods, where vapours are contracted, oc-
 “ casion various diseases, and often death to those
 “ who reside among them, as appears by melan-
 “ cholly examples in America, which abounds with
 “ poisonous trees. For this spirit of plants is a
 “ thing peculiar to each species, absolutely inimi-
 “ table, not producible by art. It has, therefore,
 “ virtues peculiar to itself, but such as are strange-
 “ ly agreeable to the human spirits “.”

IF the smell of vegetables have such high effects,
 much stronger surely may be expected from animal

^u Boerhaav. Elementa Chemicæ.

odours; and as to the effects of human breath, we know, from experience, that they are very extraordinary. It is generally thought, that in the case of epidemical diseases, the infection is propagaged by the breath ^w, and it is said to have been the practice of wicked nurses, in the time of the plague, to catch the dying breath of their departing patients in lawn handkerchiefs, for the very worst of practices; and if human breath, when fetid and corrupt, is so potent, why should we conceive it void of efficacy, when persons are in the freest state of health? Every body knows how grateful and refreshing we discern the breath of cows to be, which is thence supposed exceedingly wholesome; and as the fragrancy of young peoples breath, who are brought up under a proper regimen, falls little short of this, one may very reasonably suppose that it partakes of the same virtues.

Now to apply these principles to the matter at present under our examination. It is, I think, allowed by such as are best acquainted with the secrets of nature, that there is a very brisk and lively motion in the blood of young people; to which, according to the laws of animal œconomy, health, vigour, and growth, are attributed. On the other hand, a decay of this lively motion, and in conse-

^w Hodges de Peste. Prosper Alpin. *Histor. Natural. Ægypt.*

quence thereof, a sluggish circulation, which by degrees ceases altogether in the finest and smallest vessels, is held to be the principal cause of the stiffness in the muscles, which creates that weariness and want of force that is the great incommodity of old age. There seems, therefore, to be nothing strained or absurd, in conceiving that the warm, active, and balsamic particles thrown off by the lungs of young people into the air, which they respire, may give it such a quality as, when sucked in again by a person in years, shall communicate an extraordinary force to the circulating humours in his body, and so quicken and enliven them as to bestow a kind of reflective youthfulness, which, by constant repetition, may for many years keep off and delay those infirmities, to which people of the same age are generally subject. The more we consider this doctrine, the greater care we take in comparing causes and effects of the like nature, and the closer we attend to such experiments as seem fittest for the clearing up of this matter, the more we shall be satisfied of the truth of this conjecture, and the more credible this invention of Hermippus will appear.

I AM very sensible that there are many vain, ill-grounded, and fantastic notions that prevail among idle people, in relation to the breath; some have fancied that sorcerers have a power of fascinating therewith, such as they breathe upon, and therefore, in many of the books which treat of witchcraft, this is

usually thrown in as a circumstance ; neither is it a new, but an * old piece of superstition, which had subsisted in the world many hundred years before the late affair in France, where Miss Cadiere attributes her possession to the breath of the priest ^y. We are likewise told of nations in the Indies, who cure all diseases by breathing on such as are affected with them ; but this ought to be no more regarded than what we meet with in Pliny, of another Indian nation, who lived towards the sources of the Ganges, who have no mouths, and who are nourished by sweet favours ^z. These are either absolute fictions, or allegorical accounts, which at this distance of time, and perhaps, when Pliny himself wrote them, were not understood. He gathered most of his facts from the Greek writers, and they frequently disguised, as they sometimes falsified their narrations. But these fictions, which every body can discern, ought not to prejudice matters of fact, of the truth of which any candid enquirer may be satisfied.

THERE are in Spain a race of people, or as some writers say, an order of knighthood, stiled Saluta-

* Pfellus de dæmon.

^y See the several factums in that famous cause, in which this business of fascinating by the breath is largely treated.

^z Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 2. Cæl. Rhod. Antiq. Lect. lib. xiv. c. 21. The name given to the nation by these authors, is the Astomes.

dores, who pretend to cure wounds by breathing on the patient, and repeating certain prayers, which they affirm were taught by St. Elmo ^a. The church
of

^a Delrio Magic. Disquisit. v. ii. p. 111.

Our author states this matter very truly from the writer he cites, but having heard this passage complained of as obscure, in the first edition of this piece, it may not be amiss to explain it. Don Antonio de Solis, in the 23^d chapter of the fifth book of his History of the Conquest of Mexico, having related a remarkable defeat that Hernan Cortes met with, in which he received considerable loss, proceeds thus. “ Upon this occasion they were sensible of the singular gift of a private soldier, Juan Catalan, who without any other medicine than a little oil, and certain benedictions, cured their wounds in so short a time, that it did not look like the work of nature. The vulgar call this kind of surgery, curing by *Enfalmo*, without any other reason for it than the having heard some verses out of the Psalms among the blessings: a kind of practice which morality does not always allow, and which, however, is sometimes permitted after a very strict examination. In this case it would certainly be no presumption to look upon such a marvellous effect as the work of Heaven, the grace of healing being one of those gifts God is pleased sometimes of his mere goodness to confer upon man: Nor is it reasonable to suppose, that there should be any concurrence of the evil spirit, in the means of curing so many Spaniards, when that enemy was endeavouring at the same time to destroy them by the suggestions of his oracles.” He relates this upon the credit of Bernal Diaz de Castillo, who was an eye-witness of the transaction; but Antonio de Herrera, in the 5th chapter of the 9th book, and 2^d decad. of his General History of America, affirms that this was performed by Katherine Rodriguez, and he gives us the very form of the blessing, and adds, that she never repeated it above twice before the wounds were
healed.

of Rome has condemned this fanatical practice, and so do I; but there is another somewhat related to this, which, whether nature, or chance, first introduced into the world, is uncertain, but which is not like ever to wear out; and that is, breathing on people in a swoon, in order to bring them to themselves, which is found to be very effectual, as from natural causes might well be expected. Let us then, in all cases of this nature, distinguish between reason and report; vulgar opinion, and the sense of capable judges; the practices of mountebanks and deceivers, and deductions from physical principles, by men of learning and sound sense. I do not, however, deny that popular remedies have found admittance into physic, and ought there to be retained; for, in that as well as in chemistry, the effects of medicines are considered as experiments, upon which wise men reason, and assign the uses, though there might be another sort of people who first found them out; it is one thing to prescribe rationally, and another to be lucky in cures. Hoffman and Boerhaave are the most different people in the world from Paracelsus and Van Helmont, who yet were very extraordinary men in their way.

healed. Another writer reconciles these two authors, by assuring us, that Juan Catalan prescribed the manner of curing, and that Katherine Rodriguez performed it, being esteemed a woman of great virtue and piety, which makes this story much for our author's purpose.

I do not imagine that Hermippus, by reasoning, found out this remedy against old age ; I am inclined rather to think it found out him, that is to say, by vigorous effects, he was led to the cause, and by feeling himself revived by this medicine, taught the knowledge and efficacy of it. If one was disposed to pursue the method of the ancients, and to dress up this story in the garb which Plato would have given it, one might relate it thus.

WHEN the blooming Thyſbe, whom the Graces adorn, and the Muses instruct, converses with the good old Hermippus, her youth invigorates his age, and the brisk-flame that warms her heart, communicates its heat to his, so often as the lovely virgin breathes, the kindly vapours fly off full of the lively spirits that swim in her purple veins ; these old Hermippus greedily drinks in, and as spirits quickly attract spirits, so they are presently mingled with the blood of the old man. Thus the vapour, which but a moment before was expelled by the brisk beating of the heart of Thyſbe, is communicated by the æther to Hermippus, and passing through his heart, serves to invigorate his blood, so that almost without a metaphor, we may say, the spirits of Thyſbe give life to Hermippus. For what is there more easy to apprehend, than that the active spirits of this brisk and blooming maid should, when received from the air, thaw the frozen juices of her aged friend, and thereby give them a new force, and a
freer

freer passage ; and thus Hermippus possessing at once the strength his nature retains, and borrowing fresh spirits from the lovely Thyſbe, what wonder that he, who enjoys two ſorts of life, ſhould live twice as long as another man ?

SUCH had been its appearance, if we had derived this fact from a Grecian ſage, and then perhaps it had been honoured with numerous commentaries, and laboured explications. But the Romans were a graver people, they contented themſelves with delivering truth in the language of truth, and thought that, like all great beauties, ſhe looked beſt in a plain dreſs.

HISTORY informs us, that very many who ſpend their time in the inſtruction, and of conſequence in the company of youth, have lived to great ages ; thus Gorgias, the maſter of Iſocrates, and many other eminent perſons lived to be 108 ; the year before his death ſomebody demanded in his ſchool, how he had been able to ſupport ſo long the tedious burthen of old age ; the ſophiſt replied, that he regretted nothing he had done, and felt nothing of which he could reaſonably complain ; my youth, ſaid he, cannot accuſe me, nor can I accuſe my old age ^b. His ſcholar Iſocrates, in the 94th year of

^b Plin. Hiſtor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 48. Valer. Max. lib. viii. c. 13.

his age, published a book, and survived that publication four years, in all which time he betrayed not the least failure, either in memory or in judgment; but as he had long lived, so he died with the reputation of being the most eloquent man in Greece^c. Xenophilus, an eminent Pythagorean philosopher, taught a numerous train of students, till he arrived at the age of 105, and even then enjoyed a very perfect health, and yet he left this world before his abilities left him^d. Nicholas Leonicensus read the physic lectures at Ferrara, in the last age, upwards of 70 years, and Langius tells us, that when he heard him, he was somewhat above 96, and to a person who asked him, by what rule he had acquired this green old age, he answered, by delivering up my youth chaste to man's estate^e. Platerus tells us, that his grandfather, who exercised the office of a præceptor to some young nobleman, married a woman of thirty when he was in the hundredth year of his age. His son, by this marriage, did not stay like his father, but took him a wife when he was twenty; the old man was in full health and spirits at the wedding, and lived six years afterwards^f. These are instances very surprising, and seem to argue that

^c Plutarch in vit. Isocrat.

^d Plin. Hist. Natural. lib. vii. c. 50. Valer. Max. ubi supra.

^e Melch. Adam. in vit. Germ. Med. p. 141.

^f Plateri Observat. lib. i. p. 233, 234.

the company of young people is a great preservative against old age.

THE celebrated Lewis Cornaro, so well known to the world by his elaborate treatises on the benefits of a sober life, amongst other things that he relates of himself, tells us this; that when he first began his regimen, he brought home eleven little nephews, all sons of the same father and mother, all fine healthy children, whom he took the pains to educate himself; adding, that whenever he came from the senate, he diverted himself with the innocent mirth, harmless sports, and inoffensive rattle of the youngsters. “Some of the elder of them, says he, entertained me more agreeably. They understand musick, often play upon the lute, accompany it with their voices, and I too frequently join my own, which is as clear as strong, and as sweet as ever it was. I have likewise composed a very diverting comedy, the scenes of which are diversified with an inoffensive variety of wit and humour, that has in it an agreeable turn of thought, and quaintness of expression. Comedy, you know, is generally the child of youth, as tragedy is the product of old age. The latter on account of its gravity and seriousness, besitting more mature years; whilst the former, by its gaiety of wit and humour, is more agreeable to youth. Now, if an antient Greek poet, though he was ten years younger than myself, was admired and celebrated
“ for

“ for his having wrote a tragedy, why should I
 “ be esteemed less happy, or less myself, who have
 “ composed and published a comedy ? When I
 “ am confident, the same poet, though he was ten
 “ years younger than I am, yet had not a better
 “ share of health, or a livelier imagination ^g.” I
 make use of the author’s own words, because
 Cornaro must, of all others, have best known
 himself, and the very spirit he shews in reciting
 these things, is a most evident proof of the strength,
 vigour, and youthfulness of his constitution. I
 will, however, mention another, and that a more
 modern instance.

Francis Secardi Hongo, usually distinguished by
 the name of Huppazoli, was consul for the state of
 Venice, in the island of Scio, where he died in the
 beginning of 1702, when he was very near 115.
 This man was a native of Casal, in the Montferrat.
 He married in Scio, when he was young, and being
 much addicted to the fair-sex, he had in all five
 wives, and fifteen or twenty concubines, all of them
 young, beautiful women, by whom he had forty-
 nine sons and daughters, whom he educated with
 the utmost tenderness, and was constantly with them,
 as much as his business would permit. He was ne-
 ver sick ; his sight, hearing, memory, and activity,
 were amazing ; he walked every day about eight

^g See Cornaro’s Benefits of a sober Life, p. 33.

miles; his hair, which was long and graceful, became white by that time he was fourscore, but turned black at an hundred, as did his eye-brows and beard at 112. At 110 he lost all his teeth, but the year before he died he cut two large ones, with great pain. His food was generally a few spoonfuls of broth, after which he eat some little thing roasted; his breakfast and supper, bread and fruit, his constant drink, distilled water, without any addition of wine, or other strong liquor, to the very last. He was a man of strict honour, of great abilities, of a free, pleasant, and sprightly temper, as we are told by many travellers, who were all struck with the good sense, and good humour of this polite old man^b. The reader will easily discern, that the point upon which I chiefly insist, "is his having continually young company about him, especially young women; for though neither himself, nor, for ought I know, any body else, ever remarked that this might contribute to the lengthening his life, yet so the fact might be, though not observed. It is indeed more for my purpose to collect accounts like these, where there is clear evidence of the fact I would establish, before the principle, to which I refer it, was ever thought of, than to quote instances of a fresher date, since the thing might have been in my head. These are instances that cannot be warped; I have cauti-

^b Voyages de Tournefort, &c.

ously cited my authors, and sometimes the words of the people themselves, so that I need not ask, where I can force belief.

THE reader will not, I dare say, think me tedious if I subjoin some few instances of the same nature, which have either occurred to me, or of which I have been informed since I first committed my thoughts upon this subject to the press. Frederick Armand de Schombergh, one of the greatest officers in the last century¹, and who, by his personal merit, raised himself higher than any man of his time, for he was marshal of France, generalissimo of the troops of the elector of Brandenburg, duke and grandee of Portugal, duke and peer both in England and Ireland, and knight of the garter at the time of his decease. Every body knows that he was killed at the battle of the Boyne, after passing that river on horseback, and bringing up a regiment that had fallen into some confusion, with all the vigour and spirit of a young man. He was then fourscore and two, and yet very hearty, active, and capable of fatigue, nor was he more remarkable for his military accomplishments, than for his po-

¹ Our author might have these particulars from some German memoirs of marshal Schomberg; but wherever he had them, the facts are very well known, and for this reason it seems unnecessary to load the page with citations to prove them.

lite and easy behaviour, he was wont to say, that when he was young he conversed with old men to gain experience, and when he was old he delighted in the company of young men to keep up his spirits. This is the reason that I mention him, for he was in nothing more distinguished than by his disposition. His person was agreeable, he made a fine figure on horseback, he danced and walked well, and was so far from feeling any of the incommodities of age, either in body or mind, that in point of dress, exercise, and sprightly humour, he came nothing short of the company he kept. The winter before he was killed in Ireland, he was walking in the Park with abundance of young officers about him, and being met by a grave English nobleman, he could not help telling the marshal, that he was surprised to see him in such company ; “ why so, my lord, replied Schomberg, don’t you know that a good general always makes his retreat as late as he can ? ” It will, I presume, be readily allowed, that his keeping young company might contribute not a little to preserving his good temper, and his gaiety of mind ; but for my part, I go a little farther, and cannot help persuading myself that it had an influence on his health too, whether he perceived it or not. As a general and commander in chief, for upwards of forty years, he must, in consequence of the encouragement he gave them, have been surrounded continually with a parcel of hale wholesome young fellows, and as these are not commonly sparing of

their words, where they may speak freely, he must from thence have derived all the advantages of a balmy salutiferous atmosphere composed from the mixture of their breaths, which very probably might have defended him from the inconveniences of age for many years longer, more especially as he was temperate in his diet, chearful in his humour, and constant in his exercises, of which riding and walking were the chief.

THOUGH marshal Schomberg was a German, yet as he was an English duke, he puts me in mind of another illustrious person exactly of his own temper and age, and who died but two years before him; this was the celebrated poet Waller, who, at upwards of fourscore, wrote with all the fire and vivacity of a rising genius^k. It is from Mr. St. Evremont, that I learn his great love for the company of
young

^k In a letter written by Mr. St. Evremont to the famous Mr. de la Fontaine, we have the following passage: "Mr. Waller, whose loss we regret, carried the full vigour of his wit to the age of fourscore and two." A very little before his death he made a journey to Windsor, to consult Sir Charles Scarborough about a pain he had in his leg. I come, said he, to you, as to an old friend, as well as a physician, to ask what this swelling means? why, to deal plainly, said Sir Charles, your blood will run no longer. At this Mr. Waller was so little surpris'd, that he repeated a passage from Virgil applicable to the occasion, and soon after paraphras'd it in these lines of his own.

young people, and more especially of the ladies. He had been remarkable in his youth for being a great admirer rather than a general lover of the sex, for his morals were unblemished, and his conduct, at once, as chaste and as gallant as his verses. He loved to sun himself as it were in the beams of beauty, and was never so happy, even at fourscore, as when in the midst of a circle of the youngest and finest women about the court; neither was this an impertinent affectation, springing from the remembrance

The seas are quiet when the winds give o'er,
So calm are we when passions are no more,
For then we know how vain it were to boast
Of fleeting things, so certain to be lost :
Clouds of affection from our younger eyes
Conceal that emptiness which age descries.

The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light, thro' chinks that time has made ;
Stronger by weakness, wiser, men become
As they draw near to their eternal home.
Leaving the old, both worlds at once they view,
That stand upon the threshold of the new.

It is a little strange, that our author mentions the authority of Mr. St. Evremont, and yet makes no use of his example who lived to a great age, and preserved his senses to the last ; but very probably he thought it a good reason to leave him out, because he was not remarkable for affecting young company, and was for many years subject to great infirmities, which were probably the effects of a very free, or rather luxurious, way of living.

of past pleasure, for the same sprightly wit and innocent liveliness of conversation, attended him even then, so that his company was as much sought as if he had not been so old by half a century. Upon this inclination of his he was complimented by a French poet, in a short copy of verses, ending with these two fine lines,

“ Amidst the young and fair you spend your hours,
 “ Nor think of winter, whilst amongst the flowers.”

I NEED not repeat the application, for though, in all probability, it was the pure efforts of his temper that led him to this conversation, and kept him continually in this gay train, yet it might have an effect upon his constitution too, and perhaps he might find himself more chearful, and at ease from these conversations, though he did not enter into the philosophical, or rather physical reason, which I have assigned for it. We see what wonders are done by the baths at Aix-la-Chapelle, the waters of the Spa, and the wells of Pyrmont, in removing hysteric and splentic complaints; but, after all, is it the baths and the waters that work the cure entirely, or have not the company, diversions, and exercise, a considerable influence in recovering such patients? If they had not, methinks it would be a difficult thing to assign the reason why the same persons return to them so frequently, they know the
 benefit

benefit they receive, or rather they feel it, and therefore are the less curious in their enquiries whence that benefit springs.

BUT the last example I have to mention comes closer to the point, and therefore I shall enter upon it without any introduction. I have it from unquestionable authority, that a certain nobleman of France, whom I am not at liberty to name, made use of the secret of our Hermippus, and keeping constantly in his house, under the pretence of a charitable care of their education, ten or twelve young girls, in whose company he was continually, and maintained himself thereby, in a full flow of health and spirits, till he was upwards of ninety. It is said he might have survived some years longer, had not a scruple struck into his head that there was something of irreligion in this practice, upon which he dismissed his guardian angels, fell into a languishing state, and in a very few months died, as much for the want of their breaths as his own. How he came by this method, whether by information, observation, or intuition, I cannot say, but the fact is both certain and well known. The famous marshal Villars was taken notice of for shunning the company of persons of like years, and affecting to live with the young people, which he was once told, proceeded from his desire of forgetting that he was become old. To which he answered, with great spirit, that he would never put it in the power of his enemies to

remember it. He kept his word perhaps with too great vigour, for in his last campaign, though he began to feel the infirmities of age, yet he disssembled them as much as possible, and gave such an instance of vivacity in attacking some squadrons of imperial horse, with the king of Sardinia's guards, that the polite monarch could not help telling him, he lost the experienced general in beholding all the ardour of a young officer: to which the marshal replied "that lamps were apt to sparkle when they were expiring;" and indeed this was his last exploit in the field. But to return to my subject, which I shall endeavour to place in such a light as that truth may derive some advantage from ornament, without being eclipsed, either by unnatural or unnecessary fiction¹.

Whatever

¹ It may possibly contribute to the support of our author's arguments, if we mention two instances that have occurred amongst ourselves since the publication of this book. The field marshal earl of Stair was very remarkable for preserving a great flow of spirits, and good humour, in extreme old age, and not less so for always affecting young company, with whom he was constantly gay and cheerful; and as he was never happier than amongst his boys, as in his familiar way he was wont to call them, so they were never more delighted than when they had the honour to attend him. The other instance comes closer to our author's system. All the world hath heard of Mr. Calverley, who kept a boarding-school for young ladies in Queen Square. He maintained his health, his vigour, his cheerfulness, his good sense, and his good humour, to upwards of a hundred, and would say merrily, when he heard men forty years younger than himself

Whatever is probable, is credible, and whatever may be supposed without absurdity, an author has a right to suppose, in the support of his hypothesis ; this I hope will secure me from censure, and the rather because I intend it for the entertainment of the reader. My subject is chearful, and my argument can have no weight with people that are not chearful ; the first of our faculties that declines is the fancy, and therefore he who endeavours to keep old age at a distance must enliven that, and shew that he has the poets power of creation, by raising an appearance of that paradise, which had been the lot of man during his residence below, if not forfeited by his own folly.

I WILL suppose then of our Hermippus, that he was a tutor or director of a college of virgins, for since the inscription tells us not what he was, we may be allowed the freedom of a rational conjecture. This college of virgins, I conceive founded purely for the sake of education, and thereby affording a quick and constant succession of little maids, from the age of between five and six, to thirteen and

himself, coughing, groaning, and complaining ; “ what a troublesome thing it is to be plagued with old folks ! ” This gentleman after he parted with his school, did not survive long, and it is said he was himself of opinion, that he might not only have lived, but have enjoyed life, some years longer, if he had not quitted business.

fourteen. I imagine it might be requisite for the health, as well as proper instruction of these young ladies, that they rose pretty early in the morning, and this in all seasons of the year. In the spring and summer they might be allowed to walk and enjoy the refreshing pleasure of rural prospects, but always in the company of their director, who perhaps was obliged to entertain them during the walk, with seasonable and lively stories. If this seeming extraordinary mode of education disgust persons of a nice and prudish taste, give me leave to observe, that the Greeks used it of old, and that it is still practised by all the Eastern nations. Milesian, or Arabian tales, in which a vivacity of imagination appears, with here and there a ray of sound judgment, suit best with tender minds, and especially with feminine understandings. Women are remarkably governed by example, or to make use of a modern phrase, by the fashion. Why therefore should they not be instructed by example? There is less difference than most people imagine between real and feigned stories. They differ but as morning and evening shadows, the one is the faint picture of what has passed, the other is a lively representation of what may possibly come. In all other respects they are alike. The story of Alexander and Roxana, is now as much a dream as any in the Persian tales. One advantage that ideal relations have over stories grounded upon facts, is, that we may contrive them so as to avoid improper circumstances, which

which cannot frequently be dispensed with in respect to the latter, but at the expence of truth. With such discourses, after their early devotions were over, the fair pupils might be entertained in winter mornings, and the day be thus opened with a free, chearful, and kindly spirit, alike agreeable to his lovely wards, and grateful to the good old man.

AFTER this morning exercise, I suppose that Hermippus his and female pupils, retire in order to bathe, to dress, and to adorn themselves, all which I look upon as no less necessary for the old man, than fit and convenient for the young virgins. Every body knows, that the antients were remarkably fond of baths and of unctions, especially for men in years; and the Arabian physicians prescribe them once in a week or ten days, and order some hot and well spiced meat to be eaten after using them; but to be sure washing, cleansing, and keeping the body neat, as they tend to make old men pleasant and agreeable to such as converse with them, so they contribute not a little to their own ease, and to the preserving that suppleness in the limbs which is frequently attacked by old age. On the other hand, elegance in dress, and great niceness about their bodies, is of very high consequence to the preservation of such a temper in these young maids, as is fit to make them useful in that way of which we are speaking. About noon, after all this exercise was quite over, I suppose Hermippus meets his

6 maidens

maidens with as much chearfulness as his constitution will admit, while they receive him with that sprightliness that is natural to theirs. A short conversation should precede a light well-chosen and wholesome entertainment, of which all feeding freely, but not to fulness, season the necessary business of recruiting the body with such ingenious and diverting stories, as may amuse and recreate the mind. After the repast; music, vocal, and instrumental, and then a walk, or if the weather will not permit that, some breathing exercise within doors, to such a degree as may excite colour, but without forcing a sweat.

THE evening should, among such company, be chiefly dedicated to diversion, the ladies, and especially the youngest, should be indulged in all the little innocent pastimes that contribute either to the exercise of their limbs, or the improvements of their wits, and these ought to take their turns according to the rule prescribed by their director. For instance, after blindman's buff, hoop and hide, or hunting the hare, there should succeed questions and commands, pictures and motto's, riddles, or something of the like sort; and last of all, two or three of the eldest might gently lead them, by a few grave stories, into a fit disposition for their evening devotions; after which they might retire to their dormitory, each having her proper cell, but all open

at

at the top, as also the director's apartment at the upper end. In a college like this, with such company, and under such regulations, where all the pupils are chaste as Diana's nymphs, fresh as the spring, sweet as the summer, and harmless as the winter, ever full of life and spirits, free from diseases, cares, or distractions of mind, easy in their tempers, affable in their manners, fond of obliging, grateful when obliged; I can scarce imagine that any man could spend his time more agreeably than Hermippus, live freer from a sense of sorrow, or more remote from the shadow of death. By this regimen, he might be provided with an almost continual refreshment from their odoriferous breaths, and never lose their company, but at seasons proper for them and for him. His blood would not only receive constant supplies of spirits from the artificial atmosphere, constituted by this contrivance, but his genius also would be kept brisk and lively, by a perpetual intercourse with persons in the most active period of life. Secluded in such a retreat from all the hurry, all the disorder, all the accidents that attend a life of business, he would easily escape disquiet and fatigue, removed from all the views of profit, pomp, and pleasure; he would never feel the cruel disturbance of any restless passion, the desire of getting would never torment him, he would never be perplexed with the fears of losing, if his heart was at any time touched with pain, it must be at the parting with a scholar, and even this would
admit

admit of some relief, from the pleasure afforded him by receiving a new disciple. At least, these are the comforts I have figured to myself, attendant on such a state, and such of my readers as are blessed with more vigorous fancies, may conceive him in possession of still higher and more exquisite blessings.

I AM sensible it may be objected, that the whole of this supposition is absolutely arbitrary, that amongst the Romans, there never was any such college ^m as this under the direction of any man, or, for ought appears, in any other nation. But then it is to be considered, that I have so stated it. If Hermippus was really nourished by the breath of women, as I have already shewn it is very reasonable to believe he might, we must then conceive to ourselves some occupation, some way of life in which he might easily and constantly receive this comfortable medicine ; and if the account I have given be so far probable in itself, and free from absurdity, as to convey clearly to the reader's mind such an idea as I would willingly have it, it is not in the least material, whether there ever was such a college, for that comes not at all within my assertion, it is sufficient for my purpose, if such a college there might have been. Another reader may, perhaps, devise some easier, clearer, and more probable method of inter-

^m Except, it may be the Puellæ Fauſtinianæ, of whom we find some mention made in the ancient inscriptions.

preting this inscription ; if he does, I shall not dispute with, or envy him the fertility of his invention. My account of the matter serves to help the notion I have formed of the possibility of the thing, and therefore, as a mathematician draws his figures in order to explain the propositions he lays down, so I have exhibited this example, to illustrate the doctrine that I would recommend.

ONE may likewise suggest, that most of the examples hitherto alledged of the long life of such as have taught young people, do not reach the point I have advanced, in as much as they all confessedly belong to young men. Yet, if this objection affects what I have delivered, the credit of the inscription remains still untouched, since some understand it of boys, though I incline to interpret it of girls, for reasons that will hereafter occur. But whoever makes this objection, must admit, at the time of making it, that there is an extraordinary efficacy in the breath of young men, which, duly considered, will be found a very great concession in my favour; since, if there be any such efficacy in the breath of young men, no reason can be assigned why my supposition should be held less reasonable. All things, therefore, that make in general in favour of human breath, or in favour of the breath of young people, tend to strengthen and support what I have laid down. As to those particular circumstances which render female breath preferable, it lies upon me to assign

assign them, and this I shall do in its proper place ; in the mean time, give me leave to remark one thing more in favour of my fictitious history of the College of Virgins, viz. that the greatest men have thought it allowable to introduce such descriptions wherever they have judged them requisite, or agreeable to the subject of which they were treating. The learned Sir Thomas More laid down a system of politics in his *Utopia* ⁿ ; Barclay has written an ingenious history in his *Argenis* ; and the great chancellor Bacon has exhibited the most beautiful of all fictions in his history of the New Atlantis ^o ; which history, if I mistake not, gave birth to the Royal Society in England.

ⁿ There are some disputes about the first edition of this book ; the famous Mr. Maittaire fancied there was one in the year 1516 ; but he is mistaken, the first edition of it bore the following title, *De optimo republicæ statu, deque nova insula Utopia, Thomæ Mori libri duo, quibus præfiguntur epistolæ Desiderii Erasmi, Gul. Budæi, Petri Ægidii, ac in fine adjuncta Hieron. Buslidii epistola. Basileæ. Joan. Froben. 1518, in 4^{to}.* and has been printed very often since. It was translated into English by Ralph Robinson, in 1557, which translation bishop Burnet mistook for the author's own ; however, he ventured to make another translation in 1683, and a very good one it is. It was translated into Italian in 1548, but the author of that version is not known. There have been three translations in French, of which that by Sorbire is esteemed the best.

^o The author is right enough in his observation, Abraham Cowley borrowed his notion of a philosophic college from lord Bacon's *Atlantis* ; and from Mr. Cowley's notion of such a college, the Royal Society had its beginning.

BUT

BUT I must not conceal two other objections of far greater weight, that have been made to this doctrine of mine, by the ingenious Mr. Nunning ^P. If, says that learned person, your system be founded in truth, if there be really any such vigour and efficacy in the breath of women, or even of young women, how comes it to pass that those men have not attained to any extraordinary age, who are known to have had the greatest advantages possible in this way? Upon this, he puts two questions, why, says he, did not Solomon, whose wives and concubines were so numerous, and who undoubtedly were young, beautiful, and kept entirely from other men; why did not this Solomon, continues he, live beyond the ordinary age of man; whereas, the scripture tells us, that he did not reach that which is common in our times? this is the first objection, and it must be owned, that Mr. Nunning has put it very modestly, for Solomon had, beside this, many other advantages. He was undoubtedly a great philosopher, an excellent naturalist, and understood perfectly the art of conducting life, to which we may add, that some have believed him an exquisite anatomist, physician, and chemist; so that if he died before seventy, who was possessed of such extensive power, such immense riches, and

^P This gentleman is canon of Vreden, and is now publishing in Germany, in quarto, a work entitled, *Monumenta Monasteriensia*, which is to contain the Elogies of all the great men who have been natives of the bishoprick of Munster,

such wisdom as never centred in another man; what reason is there to suppose that such as are infinitely below him in all respects, should require the knowledge of that which was indubitably hid from him? this is the case stated fairly, freely, and fully, for we mean not to cheat or deceive our readers, but to inform and satisfy them; our endeavour is not to give an air of veracity to our own opinion, but to rectify our own notions by the standard of truth.

MR. NUNNING'S second objection, is fetched from the seraglios of the Turkish monarchs. Why, says he, do not the great lords of the Ottoman empire, who have such numbers of young and fine women always in their power, live to a great age? or rather, why since they have this balsam of life continually in their possession, are they shorter lived than other men? and that too in a country where there are more long lived people than in many others? this excellent person might have fortified also this objection, by extending it to the Shâhs of Persia, the Hans of Tartary, the great Moguls, and all the other Eastern princes, who, in this respect, enjoy to the full the same advantages with the Turkish sultans. I am not afraid of giving the utmost weight to these suggestions, because if I can fairly and clearly refute them, my doctrine must appear, if not absolutely certain, much more probable, at least, and much more agreeable to truth, than if these objections had never been mentioned. I do indeed admit,

mit, that both are very plausible, both seem directly destructive of my system; but if, notwithstanding all this, I am, as I think I am, in a capacity of shewing that they do not at all affect what I have advanced, but that, on the contrary, when duly considered, they fortify it extremely, then I hope the reader will attend, with the greater satisfaction, to some additional arguments that I shall offer in support of this notion. It is the great beauty of truth, that the more we examine it, the more different lights in which we place it, the more pains we take in turning and twisting it, the clearer we perceive its excellency, and the better the mind is satisfied about it; whereas falsehood, however fair it may appear when dressed out to advantage, or set in a false light, yet it never can long stand the test of a strict and unbiassed enquiry.

THE history of Solomon is very largely recorded in the sacred writings, and the circumstances therein laid down, enable us to give such an account of the manner of that prince's life, that we need be under no sort of surprize at the earliness of his death. He was, it is true, the wisest man that ever lived, of which he has left us very noble and convincing testimonies in his writings. He was a great politician, excellently skilled in the arts, and a perfect master of the polite literature of those times; but with all this, we see that he was a very voluptuous man. Science and pleasure engrossed him by turns,

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he would have pushed his researches beyond the bounds of human nature; and when he found himself checked, he then began to complain of the burthen of knowlege, and the tiresomeness of such enquiries. To deliver himself from these anxieties, to calm his cares, to drown his doubts, and bury his apprehensions in oblivion, he had recourse to sensual delights, having constantly in his seraglio a multitude of fine women, amounting, as the author of the book of Kings tells us, to seven hundred wives, who were princeesses, and three hundred concubines ¹. With these he led an effeminate, lascivious, and profligate life. These women were of all nations, Egyptians, Moabites, Amonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites, and each endeavoured to recommend herself to his favour by all the studied arts of luxury ². Amongst such a heterogenous mass of females, all corrupt in their morals, all different in their customs, all filled with jealousy and emulation of each other: what reason was there to hope either for quiet or for health?

IN the description we have given of the life of Hermippus, we have used our utmost endeavour to shew the means by which this sovereign medicine of which we are discoursing operates, and how it is to be employed. We suppose our old man to be of a

¹ 1 Kings xi. 3.

² Ibid. v. 1.

gentle, uniform, and pleasant disposition, always easy, always content, and surrounded by numbers of blooming virgins, too young to have either their bodies, or their thoughts tainted; and we suppose these persons spending their time together in chaste and innocent amusements. But the life of Solomon was the very reverse of this, his thoughts were in a perpetual hurry, his mind in constant agitation; one day deeply plunged in philosophical and metaphysical contemplations; the next sunk in sceptical doubts, and gloomy reflections; the third giving a loose to his pleasures, and abandoning himself without restraint, not only to the lewdness of his own desires, but to the wilder extravagancies of a multitude of vicious women. All this we learn not only from histories of indubitable authority, but from his own writings: there we see the struggles of his heart; there we see his restless love of pleasure; his intemperate thirst after knowledge, and in consequence of all this his agonies and disquiet. Is there any likeness between these two characters? can one imagine that the conversation of women, in such a diversity of circumstances, should have the same effect on Solomon and Hermippus? or can it enter into the head of any man, blessed with a sound understanding, that this, or any other medicine, could defend Solomon from old age, considering the course he held? was there ever a man that studied the prolongation of life with more assiduity than Solomon laboured to shorten it? did he not harass his spirits with intricate and

perplexed enquiries? did he not vex himself with perpetual questions about present and future felicity, which rendered it impossible for him to enjoy it? Did he not, by indulging his passions, scatter the seeds of destruction? and did he not, by his luxury and intemperance, cherish and cultivate them, till they at last, as they always do, disturbed the frame of his mind, as well as ruined his constitution? What wonder then that Solomon was no long-liver?

WHAT I have said, will, I dare say, satisfy the worthy gentleman who proposed this doubt, and every reader who seriously considers it. The objection takes Solomon for a person in that very situation wherein I would place Hermippus; but I have shewn this to be altogether groundless. The objection takes it for granted, that I look upon the breath of young women to be a universal medicine; whereas I assert only, that the breath of young virgins in a particular way, may defend a person against old age, who, by temperance and moderation, defends himself against diseases. But, besides what I have mentioned, I have yet something more to say, as to Solomon, which I might have offered before, and which would have excused me from examining his case at all, if I had in the least inclined to have sheltered myself under any such subterfuge.

ALL the accounts we have of Solomon suppose him to be under a particular dispensation, and that he
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had recourse immediately to God himself, at least twice in his life; so that this man was not in the same situation with others, and therefore not fit to be considered as an example. I might push this further still, by observing, that God was pleased to promise him length of days, if he imitated the righteousness of his father David; so that he had a much better medicine in his power than human wisdom could supply him with, and yet he knew not how to use it. The scriptures say, That when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other Gods^r. Oldness is here used in the sense in which I understand it, that is with respect to the condition, and not to the years of life, for in that sense Solomon was not old when he died, since he exceeded not sixty-seven. The plain meaning, therefore, of this text must be, that when his vices had broken his constitution, and weakened his faculties, then these women to whom he gave himself up, drew him to idolatry; and these nurses of his second childhood industriously taught him to fall. Drawn by their delusions, he sacrificed both titles to long life, viz. that which temperance gave him by the law of nature, and that which by an extraordinary revelation he received from God himself. For this, no doubt included that, since we cannot suppose that God promised long life to Solomon

^r 1 Kings v. 4.

without an implied condition, that he attended to the natural means for attaining it; the laws and promises of God must be always rational, because they are made and propounded to reasonable creatures.

AFTER examining this objection so fully, it will give me much less trouble to clear up the other. For what can there be more contrary to, or irreconcilable with the doctrine I have laid down, than the lives led by Eastern monarchs? all writers agree, that to give strength and firmness to the body, there is nothing so necessary as chastity in green years. The Germans, as Tacitus tells us, were wont to preserve themselves from women, till they were thirty at least, and this he assigns as the principal cause of their robustness, courage, and long life *. Ages before his time, the Spartans had formed the same notions, led thereto by reason and experience †; but with regard to the Asiatic princes, they never know what purity of manners, and chastity of mind mean, they are corrupted in their mother's nurseries, and the dissolute temper of the father prevents the virtuous education of the son. While they are yet striplings, they are permitted the use of women, in order to enervate their minds, and when they grow up, an effeminate luxury becomes the principal business of their lives. Amongst such men as these

* De Morib. German.

† Plutarch. in Lacon.

shall we look for health or long life ? Is this agreeable to the rules of wisdom or science, I mean to the natural dictates of good-sense, or to the maxims of physic ? If not, where lies the strength of the objection ?

BUT besides all this, what if there be still a shorter, plainer, or more decisive answer, which is, that we can never properly judge in this case, because experience teaches us that these princes seldom or never die a natural death. In the field they are exposed to the common chances of war, and if we look into the Turkish, Persian, or Indian stories, we shall find at least a third part of their monarchs have fallen in battle. Again, consider them in their civil capacity, and from the very nature of an arbitrary despotic government, you must be sensible that they are continually liable to popular insurrections, in which many of their princes have likewise fallen. But if you pursue them further, and follow them into the recesses of their private life, as you will perceive them to be no way happier, so you will find them much less safe than any of their subjects. The intrigues and jealousies of their many wives, must always expose such princes to a multitude of dangers, especially in countries where poisons are very common, and where the most dexterous use of them is common too.

BUT what if the sacred history, which furnished the first and strongest objection, contains another history, which is the fullest, clearest, and most satisfactory proof that can be offered in favour of the opinion I espouse? The case I mean is, that of king David in his old age, which I shall state fully and fairly. It is said, that king David grew old and stricken in years, his natural heat decaying to such a degree, that no addition of cloaths could give him heat; in this distress the physicians advised him to the very remedy which I recommend. "Let there be sought, said they, for my lord the king, a young virgin, and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in his bosom, that my lord the king may get heat." Accordingly Abishag, the Shunamite, was brought to the king, and of her we read that she was a damsel very fair, that she cherished the king, and ministered to him; but the king knew her not.^u This is the story, as it lies in the book, and from hence I think it plainly appears that the physicians of those times were well acquainted with the efficacy of this remedy, and understood how age might be benefited by youth.

^u 1 Kings i. 1. See also the Commentaries of Munster, Grotius, &c. among the larger critics, who all interpret these passages of scripture in this way.

THE famous monk Roger Bacon, whom I have cited before, in his treatise of the Cure of Old Age, has a large chapter upon this subject; though, as he wrote to a pope, and in an age no ways favourable to him or his discoveries, he thought proper to conceal what he admits to be the most efficacious medicine it was in his power to prescribe, under such dark and obscure terms, that few I believe have reached his true meaning. It may, perhaps, be suspected that I have deceived myself, and that having this notion in my head, I have found in Bacon's ^w works things that were never there; for which reason, as well as because I can offer nothing more curious, or more pertinent of my own, I will cite as much of his book as relates to this subject, and leave it to my reader to decide how far I do him justice by my comment.

“ I HAVE read many volumes of the wise, I find
“ few things in physic which restore the natural
“ heat, weakned by dissolution of the innate mois-
“ ture, or increase of a foreign one. But certain
“ wise men have tacitly made mention of some
“ medicines, which is likened to that which goes
“ out of the mine of the noble animal; they affirm,
“ that in it there is a force and virtue which re-

^w R. Bacon, De Prolongatione Vitæ, c. xii.

“ stores and encreases the natural heat. As to its
 “ disposition, they say, it is like youth itself, and
 “ contains an equal and temperate complexion ;
 “ and the signs of a temperate complexion in men
 “ are, when their colour is made up of white and
 “ red, when the hair is yellow, inclining to red-
 “ ness and curling. According to Pliny, when
 “ the flesh is moderate, both in quality and quan-
 “ tity ; when a man’s dreams are delightful ; his
 “ countenance chearful and pleasant, and when
 “ in his appetite of eating and drinking he is mode-
 “ rate. This medicine, indeed, is like to such a com-
 “ plexion ; for it is of a moderate heat, its fume is
 “ temperate and sweet, and grateful to the smell ;
 “ when it departs from this temperature, it departs
 “ so far from its virtue and goodness. This medi-
 “ cine doth therefore temperately heat, because it
 “ is temperately hot ; it therefore heals, because it
 “ is whole. When it is sick, it makes a man sick.
 “ When it is distempered, it breeds distempers, and
 “ changeth the body to its own disposition, because
 “ of the similitude it hath with the body.

“ FOR the infirmity of a brute animal rarely
 “ passeth into man, but into another animal of the
 “ same kind. But the infirmity of a man passeth
 “ into man, and so doth health, because of like-
 “ ness. Know, most gracious prince ! that in this
 “ there is a great secret. For Galen saith, that
 “ whatever is dissolved from any thing, it must of
 “ necessity

“ necessity be assimilated to that thing, as is manifest in diseases passing from one to another ;
“ such as weakness of the eyes, and pestilential diseases. This thing hath an admirable property,
“ for it doth not only render human bodies safe from corruption, but it defends also the bodies of
“ plants from putrefaction. This thing is seldom found, and although sometimes it be found, yet
“ it cannot commodiously be had of all men. And instead of it, the wise do use that medicine which
“ is in the bowels of the earth, complete and prepared, and that which swims in the sea, and that
“ which is the square stone of the noble animal ;
“ so that every part may be free from the infection of another. But if that stone cannot be acquired, let other elements, separated, divided, and
“ purified, be used.

“ Now when this thing is like to youth that is of temperate complexion, it hath good operations ; if its temperature be better, it produceth
“ better effects ; sometimes it is even in the highest degree of its perfection, and then there is that
“ property whereof we have spoken before. This differs from other medicines and nutriments,
“ which heat and moisten after a certain temperate manner, and are good for old men. For other
“ medicines principally heat and moisten the body ; and, secondarily, they strengthen the native heat ;
“ but this doth principally strengthen the native
“ heat,

“ heat, and after that, refreshes the body by moist-
 “ ening and heating it. For it reduces this heat in
 “ old men, who have it but weakly and deficient,
 “ to a certain stronger and more vehement power.
 “ If a plaister be made hereof, and applied to the
 “ stomach, it will help very much, for it will re-
 “ fresh the stomach itself, and excite an appetite ;
 “ it will very highly recreate an old man, and
 “ change him to a kind of youth, and will make
 “ complexions, by what means soever depraved or
 “ corrupted, better.

“ MANY wise men have spoken but little of this
 “ thing ; they have indeed laid down another thing
 “ like it, as Galen, in his fifth book of simple medi-
 “ cines, and Johannes Damascenus, in his aphorisms.
 “ But is to be observed, that Venus doth weaken
 “ and demolish the power and virtue of this thing ;
 “ and it is very likely that the son of the prince, in
 “ his second canon of simple medicines, spoke of the
 “ thing, where he saith, “ that there is a certain me-
 “ dicine concealed by wise men, lest the incontinent
 “ should offend their Creator.” There is such a heat
 “ in this thing, as in young men of a sound com-
 “ plexion, and if I durst declare the properties of
 “ this heat, this most hidden secret should present-
 “ ly be revealed. For this heat doth help the pal-
 “ sical, it restores and preserves the wasted strength
 “ of the native heat, causeth it to flourish in all
 “ the members, and gently revives the aged.”

These are precisely the words of Fryar Bacon ; the thing now to be considered is, whether we have rightly interpreted them, or whether they are capable of any juster and more natural sense, which after a few reflections on the motives that determined us, thus to explain it, shall be left to the reader's judgment.

SOME have entertained an opinion, that this mysterious preparation was no other than the quintessence of human blood ; but whoever considers the description of it, in all its parts, will easily discern that it can be no such thing, since the odour or scent of it is recommended on account of its grateful sweetness ; besides, quintessences are taken inwardly, whereas, he directs this medicine to be applied as a plaster to the stomach, and indeed the other marks agree with such a quintessence as ill as this. Others have believed, that our author intended here to describe a kind of precious stone, but such must be absolutely unacquainted with his manner of writing ; for he is no affecter of mysteries, in order to strike his reader with amazement, or to raise his own reputation, both of these little arts he justly condemned. His obscurity proceeds from this, that at the time he wrote he was in prison for writing against the philosophy that was then current, and he addressed this book to pope Nicholas IV. his prosecutor, in order to obtain his pardon ; but being doubtful how far it would operate, he was very cautious in writing, that he
might

might not afford room for a second accusation, of laying things secret in their nature open to vulgar capacities. Now, if he was here describing a precious stone, why should he talk so darkly? this certainly did not require so much pains to be taken to hide it, and so far would such a dark account have been from serving this purpose, that it would have been visibly contrary to his design, by leaving room for extraordinary conjectures, where, without the least danger, he might have spoken out. Whereas, if our interpretation be admitted, there was the utmost reason for all this caution; his apology is perfectly reasonable, and all the doubtings and hesitations that are thrown in, appear so many modest excuses, very artfully and very properly placed.

LET us consider this description of Bacon's, and compare it with the picture drawn by the hand of a greater and still more knowing man, and we shall be apt to think that we hear Solomon describing the lovely Shunamite. Look upon Bacon's words again, and imagine the thin veil to be removed; you will then see the perfect figure of this damsel that was very fair; you will discern the rose of Sharon, and the lily of Damascus; her hair like purple, in curling locks; her two young roes that are twins, feeding among lilies; her head filled with the dew, and her locks with the drops of the night; her countenance fair as the moon, clear as the sun; her fruit sweet to the taste, as she sets under the shadow
with

with great delight; her spikenard and chief spices, while the south wind blows upon her garden, that the spices thereof may blow; her well of living waters, and streams of Lebanon; and here the fairest among women is wounded by the watchmen, and then her beloved departs.

THIS commentary sufficiently explains the text; but to put it beyond doubt, and to apply all this effectually to my subject, I shall touch gently on two or three remarkable passages. In the first place, our author says, that this medicine is likened to that which goes out of the mine of the noble animal, and what can this mine be but woman, in whom, as in a mine, the noble animal is formed. Then again, our author says, the infirmity of a brute animal rarely passes into man, but into another animal of the same kind; but the infirmity of a man passes into man, and so does health, because of likeness. Here he lays open a great secret in philosophy, viz. that there is a sympathy in health, as well as contagion in disease, and that as a morbid breath infects, so a wholesome one may exhilarate. Taken in this sense, nothing can be easier, plainer, or more rational, nor is there any other sense the words, literally taken, can bear. The last passage I shall remark is, when he observes, that Venus weakens and diminishes the power and virtue of this remedy. How exactly does this agree with the pertinent reflection of the author of the book of Kings, when repeating

peating the uses David made of Abishag; he says, with a particular emphasis, “but the king knew her not.” A young virgin taken in this manner, recalls heat and life into an old man; but if forgetting that this is a temporary and artificial vigour, he uses it as if it were a natural one; he may indeed give life to another, but it will be at the expence of his own. When these exploits are related to us as marks of old men’s vigour, we should set them down as marks of their folly too; for as Solomon says, that “there is a time to be born, and a time to die;” so nature and true philosophy teach, that there is a time to beget, and a time to abstain from begetting.

I WILL take the liberty also of drawing some advantage even from the second objection, since, with respect to Eastern princes, though it be true that most of them die early, yet is it no less true that, where they do not die violent deaths, they frequently live to a great age; as for instance, Shah Abbas, and Aurengzebe. Now if we consider the constant and prodigious fatigues of these monarchs, the many battles they fought, the tedious marches they made, the variety of dangers they ran through, and the vast expence of spirits that a life of such incessant action, and such intense thought, must occasion; it will not be easy to find in a country where the art of physic is far from being so perfect as it is even in Europe; I say it will be hard to find, in such places, any medicine capable of producing so extraordinary

ordinary effect, if we exclude this of which I am speaking. For though I am very doubtful, and therefore lay no stress on the wholesomeness of the breath of women; yet, in the seraglios of such princes, there are always so many virgins, and these of such near access to the person of the prince, that I cannot but apprehend his vigour and health to be greatly assisted by those salutiferous streams of balsamic air. I cannot help adding what seems to be still a stronger argument in favour of my supposition, and it is this, that the Arab princes scattered through the dominions of the grand Signior, who are less exposed to foreign wars, or domestic intrigues, than other oriental princes, actually live beyond the ordinary age of man, and die at last as every man ought to die, because their blood can run no longer. At least, I have a right to make use of a circumstance so probable as this is, in support of my opinion, when it is thought reasonable to take a fact, which has only a superficial resemblance to the case I have stated, as a sufficient ground for an objection against the position I am endeavouring to make good; probability is certainly nearer a-kin to evidence, than a bare similitude of circumstances, which vanishes upon a strict examination.

AFTER these excursions, let us return to a more strict examination of our subject: I have already shewn how the breath of virgins may operate upon old men, when mixed with the common air, and

so respired by them. But let us consider a little, whether these numerous and subtile effluvia may not operate some other way than this. All physicians agree, since the doctrine of the circulation of the blood has been established, as well as made known to the world, by the skill and learning of that incomparable Englishman Dr. Harvey *, that a great part of our aliments, after entering the blood, are thrown out from thence in so imperceptible a manner, that this kind of evacuation is very properly stiled insensible perspiration. This was first carefully examined by Sanctorius, who found that it was far more considerable alone, than all the other animal secretions taken together †. If this be so, and that it is so, no man in his senses now doubts, then it follows, that there must be prodigious quantities of the matter of this insensible perspiration, mixed in the air, surrounding the perspiring bodies, and consequently this air must be impregnated strongly with the qualities inherent to that matter.

* Our author alludes here to the remarkable felicity of Dr. Harvey, who originally found, and then fully demonstrated the doctrine of the circulation of the blood, which was at first, as most new inventions are, opposed with great heat and spleen; but came at last to be as generally received and admired, as it deserves. Dr. Harvey died in 1657, thirty years after he first published his discovery; in his *Exercitatio Anatomica de Motu Cordis*. Printed at Francfort in 1627.

† See his famous treatise *De Medicina Statica*, which the English reader may consult in own language, translated by the judicious and indefatigable Dr. Quincy.

IF we push this enquiry still further, and labour to make ourselves acquainted with the nature of the particles that are thus thrown off, a little attention will make that matter plain. For since insensible perspiration is owing to the circulation of the blood, it necessarily follows, that the particles thrown off by the blood, must participate of the nature of that fluid from which they are thrown off. Now we know the blood of young people to be soft, oily, and balsamic, as well as we can know any thing, because this appears to us from its effects, which are a brisk and lively disposition; perfect health, and quick growth, to all which, a blood thus constituted, is absolutely necessary. Upon these principles, it is plain, that the matter perspired by young people in such circumstances, as I have supposed the pupils of Hermippus to be, must have all the qualities of their blood, and be a soft, smooth, slippery, balsamic steam, continually flowing from their bodies, and as they are constantly drawing in the circumambient air, and continually throwing off this matter, they must, in the compass of a few hours, absolutely change the whole mass of air, in a room where they are taught by their preceptor, who, in that case, will receive into himself a large proportion of this perspirable matter, in the same manner that it is thrown off by them.

THERE are many people, I know, who will be apt to treat this part of my discourse as whimsical and chimerical, and, for this very reason, I have not insisted upon it so largely as I might have done, or in such strong and direct terms. I might have entered nicely into the computations that have been made of the quantity of matter thrown off in this way, and from thence I might have deduced many curious, and, to competent judges, convincing proofs; but I affect not this critical kind of writing, which might possibly deprive me of a great number of readers, and secure the assent only of those who are least likely to carry this doctrine into practice. But let me have leave to observe, that what I have laid down, is an indisputable fact, and not among the number of those about which much has been written, and nothing settled. Sanctorius, who first treated this matter judiciously, and practically, had the honour to perfect his discovery, and to carry the matter as far as it could go, and this in the best method, I mean that of experiments; for he had a chair fixed on a balance, and in such a manner accommodated with springs, as to discover the slightest alteration in his weight. By the use of this chair, and by constant observation of what he eat, drank, perspired, and evacuated every other way; he came at the certain knowledge of what he has delivered, and therefore we may, with the utmost confidence, believe that, at least, one half of what we eat or drink,

drink, after passing through the blood, is thrown off in the way I have described ^z.

A VERY ingenious Frenchman, to whom the world is indebted for as profitable, and at the same time as pleasant a work, as any published of late years, has endeavoured to illustrate this doctrine by a very well contrived fiction, which I will repeat to the reader, because nothing can serve my purpose better, as I am persuaded nothing can entertain him more ^a. “The day after our arrival at London, “several tradesmen came to our lodgings, in order “to sell us the commodities and curiosities of their “country. Every one of the company fixed readily “his attention on what pleased him most. Some “bought gloves, others ribbons, and others silk “stockings; the merchandize which fell to my “share, was several perspective glasses and micro- “scopes. He who sold them was an excellent ma- “thematician, a man of great capacity, and could “speak French tolerable well. I kept him to din-

^z We must consider, in reasoning upon this subject, that Sanctorius wrote in Italy, where the perspiration may be reasonably supposed much greater than in northern countries, of which our author was aware, and has made a proper deduction.

^a *Mélanges d'Histoire et de Literature*, par M. De Vigneul-Marville. Tom. ii. p. 461. It may not be amiss to observe, that this is not the true name of the author of that curious book, but one, under which he chose to hide it, on account of some free censures contained in that diverting miscellany.

“ ner, and as he was mighty well pleased with the
“ entertainment, he told me, after he rose from ta-
“ ble, that he had a great curiosity to shew me.
“ He then took out of a shagreen box, an instru-
“ ment in a tortoisshell case, which proved to be a
“ most excellent microscope. I may well bestow
“ this epithet upon it, since it was so excellent as
“ not only to discover an infinity of bodies imper-
“ ceptible to the naked eye, but even the atoms of
“ Epicurus, the subtile matter of Descartes, the va-
“ pours of the earth, those which flow from our
“ own bodies, and such as derive to us here the
“ influence of the stars.

“ THE first experiment I made, was looking on
“ the person from whom I received it, at the dis-
“ tance of four or five paces, which gave me the
“ opportunity of discerning an infinite number of
“ little worms that were feeding most voraciously
“ upon his cloaths, by which I perceived, that con-
“ trary to the common opinion, it is not we who
“ wear out our cloaths, but they are fairly eaten off
“ our backs by these invisible insects; I changed
“ my situation, and considering my mathematician
“ in another light, he appeared to be enveloped in
“ a dark cloud. He told me that this appearance
“ was owing to his perspiring strongly after dinner,
“ and that this ought to convince me of the truth
“ of what Sanctorius had delivered in respect to the
“ proportion between this and other secretions.

“ WE next went into the kitchen, where there
“ was a large piece of beef roasting for the servants,
“ and I had the pleasure of seeing with the same
“ microscope, how the fire separates all the parts
“ of the wood; upon which it acts and darts them
“ by the violence of its motion against the beef that
“ turns before it, wounding it as it were with an
“ infinite number of shafts, and so tearing it to
“ pieces, some of which are converted into juice,
“ and others into a delicate kind of smoke or va-
“ pour, which filled the kitchen, and was very sen-
“ sibly distinguished by our nostrils.

“ GOING out of the house, we saw four young
“ men playing at ball. I, at first sight, felt a
“ strong inclination in favour of one, and as strong
“ an aversion against another, whence I began earn-
“ estly to wish that this might win, and that might
“ lose. I examined both with the microscope, and
“ thereby easily distinguished the source of these
“ passions. As the men were extremely heated
“ with their exercise, they perspired strongly, so that
“ clouds of the matter flowing from them reached us.
“ My glass shewed me distinctly that the matter per-
“ spired by him, for whom I had an inclination, was
“ exactly similar to what was perspired by myself;
“ whereas, the matter flowing from the other per-
“ son was absolutely unlike to mine in all respects,
“ and so jagged and bearded that it seemed to wound

“and pierce me like so many arrows. Hence I
“discerned that the true cause of our sudden in-
“clinations and aversions consists in the figures of
“the matter perspiring from us, and from others,
“and in the familiarity or contrariety of these in-
“sensible vapours.

“We went out of the city, and at some miles
“distance, we saw some gentlemen diverting them-
“selves in coursing a hare; as the poor creature
“passed almost close by us, I had just time to catch
“a glance of her with my glass. She appeared to
“me like a ball of fire moving with prodigious
“rapidity, and leaving a mighty smoke behind her.
“This was the matter perspired by the animal, and
“I saw that the dogs followed exactly the track of
“that smoke, and were never at all at a loss, ex-
“cept when the wind dissipated the cloud that
“issued from the flying hare.”

IN this short account, our author very ingeniously
rallies such as expect to have ocular demonstration
of things, that do not admit of any such evidence.
His microscope is nothing more than invention to
censure their folly, and expose the madness of hav-
ing that verified to the senses, which can only be ap-
prehended by reason; yet this kind of weakness still
prevails in the world, and, I dare say, there is many
a reader who would laugh at the story of the hare,
as an absolute fiction, and afterwards blush to see the
the

the same thing gravely laid down by so judicious, so intelligent a person as the great Boerhaave^b. There seems to be nothing more unintelligible or absurd, than to assert that there are things which are continually losing part of their weight, and yet never grow discernibly lighter; and yet this we see in the case of the antimonial cup, of which, when we have five hundred times made use, and after bestowing an emetic quality on five hundred glasses of wine, remains just as heavy as it was at first. We may say the same thing of the odoriferous effluvia of ambergrease, and the less agreeable steam of assafoetida. None of these things can be brought under the cognizance of all our senses, it is sufficient to convince our reason if they fall under any one of them. For instance, if I plainly discern

^b See his Chemistry, vol. i. p. 151. wherein his words are thus translated. The most subtle part of the juices of animals is a fine spirit, which is continually exhaling, wherein the proper character of the animal seems to reside, and whereby it is distinguished from all others. This we may infer from hounds, which through a long tract of ground, and a multitude of cross treads, will distinguish a particular animal out of a whole flock, the effluvia of whose footsteps it had lately scented; or will find out their master through an hundred cross ways, in the middle of a confused concourse of people. By this we may infer, how thin and subtle, yet how different from all other kinds of bodies, these effluvia must be. They seem of an oily origin, or to reside in a subtle vehicle of an oily kind, as may appear both from the analogy of things and other properties.

the smell of a rose at a certain distance ; my reason will tell me, that I am within the atmosphere of that flower, because it is impossible that I should discern its odour by the smell, if its effluvia did not strike the proper organ of that sense in me. Hence, with a little reflection, I can easily form a notion of this flower perspiring an infinite number of odoriferous particles, which, for a certain distance, so much overcome all the other different sorts of matter floating in the air, as to become so many objects of my sense of smelling ^c.

BUT now, if we take this the other way, and consider a body continually perspiring such a matter as is insensible to us, that is, particles so subtile as to escape the cognizance of all our organs of sensation, we must be extremely dull of apprehension, if we do not conceive that this perspiring body must have its atmosphere as well as the rose, or any other fragrant flower. It is, therefore, I think, a point now settled, past all dispute, that if a number of virgins are in the company of an old man, he must derive from them into himself a great quantity of that subtile matter, the qualities of which have been before described, and especially if we consider, that as these effluvia escape through the pores, the

^c See a multitude of these instances collected, and properly applied in Mr. Boyle's curious treatise upon gems.

pores must consequently be continually open, and if so, they must imbibe from without, as well as give passage to what comes from within.

I DOUBT this will appear a new paradox to many of my readers, and methinks I see some of them ready to throw my treatise out of their hands, and crying, with an air of self-sufficiency and disdain, this poor man is mad himself and he would fain make us so. But patience a little, give me leave but to propose a few familiar questions, and I will defy you to disbelieve what I had laid down. Is there any thing more common, than to find a strangury ensue upon the application of a blister? and yet how can this happen, if the particles of the cantharides did not enter through the pores, and thereby create a diversion of that salt watry fluid which is usually secreted by the kidneys, and composes what we call urine. On the other hand, it is a thing certain, that opium, used in a plaster, will procure sleep, which it could not possibly do if, in like manner, it did not find a passage through the pores into the blood: I might likewise take notice of an effect that frequently, if not constantly, results from the application of a cataplasim of camomile to the stomach, the bitter taste of which herb, in the space of two hours, is discerned on the palate. I will mention one instance more, which is at once so strong, and so common, as to put the matter quite out of dispute; I mean the ordinary method of raising

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ing salivations by unction ; for whoever considers this attentively, must be sensible that the body may be very strongly affected by things that enter into it only through the pores ^d.

I CANNOT help taking notice of a very singular passage in a French historian, whose character is perfectly well established, and which passage, in my apprehension, may contribute not a little to render all that I have asserted equally credible and clear. This author tells us ^e, that in the year 1346, there broke out of the earth in Cathay, which is that part of Great Tartary bordering upon China, a certain vapour, so prodigiously stinking as to destroy all living creatures. This, like a subterraneous fire, after it once escaped, rolled over two hundred leagues of country, devouring even the very trees and stones, and affected the air in a wonderful manner. From Cathay it passed through Asia and Greece, from thence it crossed over into Africa, and after ravaging that country, it entered Europe in 1348, making such havock in France, that not so much as a ci-

^d The Montpellier way of salivating is still a stronger proof of this, since it argues that this method of raising it is safer, more equal, and better adapted to the ends it is to answer, than that of taking things by the mouth.

^e *Abregé Chronologique de l'Histoire de France, par le sieur de Mezeray, tom. iii. p. 32.*

ty, village, or single house escaped, and from thence it passed into other countries, so as to reach even the utmost extremities of the north ; the venom, says my author, was so contagious, as to infect even by the sight. It was remarked, that it continued exactly five months in every country through which it passed. In those places where it was most favourable, it left only a third of the inhabitants, in most about a fifteenth, in some not above a twentieth part. Can one conceive that an exhalation should pass quite round the globe, and produce such terrible effects wherever it came, and shall we believe that exhalations which are continually surrounding us, have no effects at all? Or ought we to apprehend, that if such dreadful feats can be wrought by stinking and noxious exhalations, there is nothing nutritive or salutary to be performed by those of an opposite kind? I must confess, that I see no ground for such a belief.

THERE is undoubtedly, as the learned Bacon lays it down, a healthy sympathy, as well as a morbid infection^f ; and as in spite of all the care and caution we can take, we find it extremely hard

^f See p. 64. in the quotation from Bacon. If this argument be not allowed, it will be hard to assign any rational cause, why one place should be more healthy than another ; and to understand this doctrine perfectly, the reader ought to consult Mr. Boyle's treatise of the wholesomeness and unwholesomeness of the air.

to guard against, and to ward off the latter; so by a parity of reason, it should seem, that of all the methods contributing to health, the former ought to prove the most efficacious: that is to say, we think there is no way hitherto laid down for preserving the vigour of the body, and thereby securing such a supply of animal spirits, as may support the dominion of the soul, in its full extent and activity, so feasible as this; which is suggested to be the source of the longevity, and healthfulness of Hermippus. For if insensible perspiration be made through the pores, so that there is a continual steam transpiring from every body, then it follows, that where an old man is constantly attended by many young women, his body must be surrounded with an infinite quantity of the perspirable matter flowing from them; and if, on the other hand, he not only perspires through the pores, but also receives by them, as has been already demonstrated, the finest and most spirituous particles of other bodies into his own; then it is very evident, that such an old man must be, as I observed before, in such a situation, as will enable him to draw the greatest possible benefit from this most comfortable medicine.

THE more strictly we consider the structure of the human body, and the certain causes of health and sickness, the more reason we shall find to be satisfied with, and to acquiesce in the system we have laid down. Reason and experience have convinced

us, that the body is a pneumatico-hydraulic machine composed of fluids and solids, and that a good constitution, or healthy disposition arises from the proper motion of the one, and a due circulation of the other. It is also, no less certain, that this motion, and this circulation, depend reciprocally on each other. For as the circulation is obstructed, lessened, and in some measure stopped from the want of a proper motion of the solids, occasioned by their loss of the true tone and texture which they ought to have; so this very loss, on the other hand, arises from their not receiving a timely and suitable supply of nutrition from the circulating juices[§]. Hence that dryness, stiffness, and rigidity of the fibres, which properly causes the disease we call old age, to prevent which, in a natural, rational, and physical way, the only proper method is, to provide a constant, equal, and effectual supply of smooth, balsamic, and lubricating particles from the circulating fluids. If this could once be done, it is, I think, very apparent, that old age could no more attack the human body, than any other disease, against which proper precautions may be taken. But, as it is not to be expected that human wisdom should be able to perfect such a method, all that we can reasonably hope for, is, to arrive at some proficiency therein; so that though we are not able to prevent old age, we may have it at least in our power to retard it. It is in a manner

§ Boerhaav. Instit. Medic. § 1053, 1054.

incredible,

incredible, that by art, a man should be able to reach two or three hundred ; but that he should live and enjoy life to upwards of an hundred, the wisest of the antients believed, and the methods they prescribed and practised for this purpose, are all founded upon my principles, as appears from their use of frictions, baths, and ointments, all of which had been idle and improper, if they had not conceived it possible to charge the fluids, by means of them, with such particles as were fit to repair the losses of the solids ^b.

THE greatest philosophers, and the wisest men in all ages, have had this point in view, and have endeavoured to accomplish it; but this has been attended with two inconveniencies, or rather three, which I consider as the true causes why hitherto it has not been accomplished. The first is, that they have kept their notions secret; that is to say, relying upon their own abilities, they have fancied themselves capable of discovering this wonderful art, and of making it not only subservient to the private and particular purpose of preserving their own lives, but to the raising and exalting of their fame. In the next place, they have run away with particular circum-

^b Instead of citing physicians, I shall refer the reader to Plutarch's learned treatise on health and long life, where, in a narrow compass, he will see the sense of the best writers in all antiquity on this subject.

stances, and have fancied that this or that drug would restore nature, or such a particular regimen defend them from diseases. As to the first, there is not, perhaps, a single article of the *Materia Medica*, that is hitherto fully understood, which is the true reason of the great uncertainty of physic; and as to regimen, it may, and certainly has, a great effect in preserving health; but, as the wise lord Bacon judiciously observed, preserving health, and extending life, are two very different things¹.

LASTLY, these very understanding persons have dealt intirely in theory, and by this means have been surpris'd by death, while they were under a firm persuasion of being secure from his attacks; whereas, such an art must be founded wholly in experiment, as I shall shew hereafter. In the mean time, I will produce a remarkable instance in support of

¹ We shall hereafter give the reader the very words of lord Bacon upon this subject, in the mean time, it may not be improper to observe some of the most considerable variations in the regimen for health and long life. With respect to the former, the diet may be fuller and freer, the exercise brisker, and the sleep shorter, than with regard to the latter. The reason of which is not difficult to conceive; for health implies only keeping the machine of the body in perfect order, which requires barely, that the materials wear out equally; but for the prolonging of life, great care must be taken to preserve the materials, that they may be as little worn as possible, and consequently last as long as the nature of them will allow.

what I have been saying, which, if I am not very much mistaken, will afford the reader amusement and information ^k.

THE very ingenious and knowing M. Des Mai-zeaux, in the life of M. St. Evremond, tells us, this gentleman was informed by Sir Kenelm Digby, that having read the writings of that great philosopher Des Cartes, he resolved to go over to Holland on purpose to see him. He did so, and found him in his retirement at Egmond. There that studious and intelligent person received and conversed with him

^k This Sir Kenelm Digby was a very learned and a very great man. He had indeed some particular notions in philosophy, and did not always explain himself so clearly as he might have done, whence occasion has been taken to misrepresent his opinions, and thus misrepresented, to treat them as ridiculous; but that he was really a most intelligent and sagacious person, will appear from his explanation of electricity, which, as it is contained in few words, I will set down for the reader's consideration. According to his hypothesis, the amber, or other electric, being chafed or heated, is made to emit certain rays or files of unctuous steams, which, when they come to be a little cooled by the external air, are somewhat condensed, and having lost of their former agitations, spring back to the body whence they sallied out, and carry with them those light bodies that their further ends happen to adhere to at the time of their refraction; as when a drop of oil or syrup hangs from the end of a small stick, if that be dexterously and cautiously struck, the viscous substance will by that impulse be stretched out, and presently retreating, will bring along with it the dust, or other light bodies that have happened to stick to the remoter parts of it.

as a stranger, but after a considerable time spent in a free and learned discourse upon a great variety of subjects, M. Des Cartes, who had seen some of his works, told him, "that he did not doubt but he was "the famous Sir Kenelm Digby." "And if you, Sir, "replied the knight, were not the illustrious M. Des "Cartes, I should not have come over from England "on purpose to see you." Then Sir Kenelm Digby remarked to the philosopher, "that our speculative "discoveries were indeed pretty and agreeable; but "that after all, they were too uncertain and unprofitable to take up a man's whole thoughts; that "life was almost too short to attain to the right "knowledge of necessary things; that it would be "much more worthy of him, who so well understood the frame of the human body, to study ways "and means to prolong it, than to apply himself "to the barren speculations of philosophy." Des Cartes assured him, that he had already considered that matter, and that to render a man immortal, was what he would not venture to promise; but that he was very sure it was possible to lengthen out his life to the period of the patriarchs. When M. de St. Evremond told M. Des Maizeaux this particular, he added, that they were not ignorant in Holland that Des Cartes flattered himself he had made this discovery, and that he had heard several persons talk of it, who had known that philosopher; that Des Cartes' friends also in France knew it, and that Abbot Picot, his disciple and martyr, being persuaded

that he had found out this great secret, would not believe the news of his death, and that when he was ashamed to doubt of it any longer, he cried out, "Tis done and over, the world will soon be at an end !"

It is certain, as M. Des Maizeaux observes, that Des Cartes thought he had found out a way to prolong the life of man ¹. "I never took so much care," said he to M. De Zuylichem, who asked him what he was employed about ; to preserve my life as now, and whereas I thought heretofore, that death could abridge me of thirty or forty at most, it cannot surprize me now, without depriving me of the hope of above an hundred years. For it seems evident to me, that if we only guarded against certain errors, that we are wont to commit in our course of diet, we might, without any other intention, attain to an old age much longer, and more happy than now we do. But because I have need of a great deal of time and experience to examine every thing proper to this subject, I am now composing a short system of medicines, by which I hope, while I am engaged in this work, to obtain some respite from nature, and consequently to be able to prosecute my design better hereafter." M.

¹ Lettres de M. Des Cartes, tom. xi. p. 374. He wrote this letter in the forty-third year of his age, and died about twelve years afterwards ; so that nothing can be more evident, than that he was entirely mistaken in his notion upon this subject.

Baillet tells us in his life of Des Cartes, that the Abbot Picot having accompanied him to Holland, in 1647, conformed to his course of diet, during the three months which he stayed with him at Egmond; and that he was so pleased with it, that at his return to France, he seriously renounced that good eating and drinking which before he liked well enough, and was resolved to reduce himself to the rules of M. Des Cartes, thinking it would be the only way to promote the success of the secret, which he pretended was actually found out by our philosopher, to make men live four or five hundred years. And the same writer tells us, in another place, that this abbot was so fully persuaded that Des Cartes could not be mistaken in his notions on this point, that he would have sworn, it would have been impossible for him to die as he did at the age of fifty-four; and that had it not been for some unaccountable violent cause, like that which once put his machine in Sweden out of order, he would have unquestionably lived five hundred years.

THE miscarriage of M. Des Cartes is indeed an argument against his method, whatever it was; but it proves nothing to the prejudice of his opinion, that life may be extended and old age retarded. Many of his principles in philosophy are very good, and many of the arguments he used very just; but, in the latter part of his life, he became enamoured of his own notions, and ran into a prodigious fond-

ness for hypothesis; and thus, by conceiting himself more than man, he became no longer the great man that he was. A misfortune this, which has happened to others as well as Des Cartes, and which will happen to every man who runs out into extravagant lengths, and fancies that he sees farther into nature, and penetrates more deeply into the mysteries of Providence, than all who have gone before him. Humility is not only a christian, but a philosophic virtue; for the wiser a man is, the less opinion he has of his own knowledge; as he who is a great traveller, is freest from the conceits which the vulgar have of the excellency of their own countries. In fine, it was the knowledge of Des Cartes that made him conceive the prolonging human life practicable, and his vanity made him mistake the finding there was such a secret, for the secret itself^m.

BUT

^m What our author says of M. Des Cartes is very exact; but at the same time a little obscure. He seems to have a great diffidence of his own judgment, and is therefore very modest in his censures; but though, in one sense, this may be very commendable, yet, in another, it deserves to be reprov'd. He says, that Des Cartes found that such a secret might be practicable as to extend the life of man beyond its ordinary date, and he says, that his vanity made him mistake this for the secret itself. It is very true, but it is not very clear; it is a very just character of this philosopher, but, at the same time, it is a very dark one. In short, the case was this, M. Des Cartes had a very quick penetration, which enabled him to see the errors of Aristotle, and the schoolmen, and as one who sees clearly will always speak clearly,

BUT as I have said, experiment is the true test of every branch of practical philosophy. We see and know the incommodities of old age, and the times at which they are usually felt, and therefore the fairest token of the true method of arriving at healthy longevity is the keeping clear of these incommodities at those seasons of life. He that knows how to

clearly, so he found it no difficult thing to ruin their reputation, and with it the credit of their philosophy. But when, if I may be allowed the expression, he came to rectify philosophy, his vanity resulting from his success, led him into an opinion, that he could account for every thing by mere dint of parts, and establish such a new philosophy as should universally prevail in like manner as the old one. Hence it appears, that he was a false patriot in science; for he did not remove Aristotle's tyranny, in order to make the world free, but that he might supplant him, and rule as a perpetual dictator in his turn; in which, if he was not so lucky as he desired, he was much more lucky than he could expect, and his reign had lasted much longer, if Sir Isaac Newton had not deposed him, and generously restored a philosophic freedom in thinking. As to the point of which our author speaks he had certainly discovered, that the machine of the human body might be kept much longer in order than it usually was, which Sir Kenelm Digby knew as well as he; but then he flattered himself that he had parts sufficient to discover the means also of doing this, and having invented some method or other for this purpose, he presumed it must be the true method, because it was of his invention; and this will be found to be of a piece with the whole structure of his philosophy, there being hardly any part of it, so far as it is his, that, upon a strict enquiry, has been found free, or agreeable to nature; and this, I hope, is a tolerable explanation and defence of our author's censure.

manage his body, so as to answer all the intentions of physic without using it, who can protect himself from dimness of sight, dulness of hearing, numbness or pains in his limbs, the sinking of his muscles, the tremor of the nerves, and such other infirmities; may reasonably hope that he has made some progress in the science, and will certainly act rationally in prosecuting his method, whatever it may be. But then he must carefully distinguish between the effects of his method, and the consequences of a happy constitution, for without doubt these are often mistaken for each other, and as it is very possible that a man may be deceived in ascribing that to art which is really due to nature; so, as I have hinted before, it is a thing not at all less probable, that many have been indebted to art (which they practised without knowing it) for what they imagined arose from nature. He who attentively considers what has been said before, of the unusual vigour of old men that have delighted in young company, will easily apprehend what I mean, and to talk intelligibly upon a subject that has hitherto been so little examined, is the greatest merit that I pretend to assume ⁿ.

AFTER

ⁿ What our author says expressly here, and what he has hinted in many other places, is very sensible and curious, and therefore deserves to be illustrated. He gives us to understand that accident and art, which are generally speaking, thought two of the most opposite things in the world, are, notwithstanding, very often

AFTER all, we ought to keep constantly in mind that the principal and strongest causes of that complication of symptoms, which appear in the natural

often the same. This is just the case of chance and providence, for when men do not discern the causes of events, they say they happen by chance, but when they perceive, or think they perceive their causes, they are willing from thence to acknowledge a providence. An instance will make all clear. There was, about the beginning of the last century, a dealer in silks at Lyons, in France, whose name was Octavio May, a man of a good capacity, and great diligence, but by a chain of unlucky events, his affairs were brought into a very unhappy situation. His cash ran short, his resources failed, and his creditors began to suspect, all was not right ; in this unlucky situation he knew not who to consult, or how to go on. In this melancholy state, standing one day in his shop brooding over his misfortunes, he happened to put a little tuft of raw silk into his mouth, and grinding it a while between his teeth, at last spit it out. As it fell immediately before him, he observed that it had a very unusual lustre, which struck him so much, that it brought him out of his fit of the vapours. He took it up, considered it, and being a man of abilities, immediately traced the whole progress of the operation, the rubbing between the teeth, the mixture of a clammy liquor, such as the saliva, and the performing this in a place moderately warm, as the mouth is. He immediately went to work, and copying nature, produced those lustered or watered taffeties, for which Lyons has been ever since famous, and thereby acquired an immense fortune himself, and established a manufacture, which has been a continual source of riches to that city ever since. My inference is, that to a less sensible man, the shining of the raw silk had been accident, but Octavio May had prudence enough to trace the causes, and to catch that art, which otherwise perhaps, human invention had never attained.

disease of old age are external, as hath been before largely shewn, and therefore external remedies should be sought. It seems to be the specific difference between old age, and other diseases ; that the latter proceed chiefly from things that we receive into our bodies, whereas the former will come upon us in spite of any care we can take in that respect ; and though it is a point of very great consequence, towards a green old age, that we escape distempers, by which the body is weakened and destroyed ; yet this is not the only thing to be done, for, on the one hand, we see that the most healthy persons are not always long-lived, and, on the other hand, those of weak and sickly constitutions survive sometimes to the usual age of man °. We may likewise observe, that extraordinary changes in living have wonderful effects, as in the case of Cornaro, who not only passed his youth freely, but, as himself acknowledges, ran into various excesses, which brought upon him infirmities that physic could not cure, and which, notwithstanding, temperance removed. We likewise know that change of climate has wonderful effects.

° What our author says here is very agreeable to the following admonition of the great lord Verulam. We desire men would observe and distinguish that the same things do not always contribute both to a healthy and a long life, for there are some of service in procuring chearfulness of spirits, strength and vigour of the faculties, and yet shorten the course of life. There are also other things very conducive to long life, though with some danger to the health, unless prevented by suitable means.

Such as remove from Portugal to Brazil, old and infirm, revive insensibly, and live there many years in health and ease; and this is observed in other plantations, where, notwithstanding, the native inhabitants are far enough from being long lived. We may, by reflection upon these and many other incidents of a like nature, collect various rules for establishing a right method, and perhaps by much thinking, we may fall upon ways and means of acquiring those benefits by a less strict regimen than that of Cornaro, and without going so far as Portugal, Brazil, or the West Indies; yet there will be much of hazard and uncertainty in these trials, with this peculiar inconvenience, that if we should mistake, it is a thousand to one that this mistake cannot be repaired.

Hermippus undoubtedly made use of a far more rational, as well as efficacious medicine. For we have proved, by all the methods, that the nature of our argument will allow, the particles respired and perspired, by young persons in full health, to be the smoothest, softest, and most nutritive that can be conceived. On the other hand, the method he took in applying these, not only by receiving them with the air every time he drew breath, but drawing them in also through all the pores of his body, by that sort of animal action, which is in a manner spontaneous, must have increased their effects; and taking this altogether, one cannot help considering him

him as a person in a constant warm bath, of the most spirituous and unctuous humours, which were continually pervading him, at the same time that, by the vapours of the young people's breaths, he drank not so much air as life. But if we will add one circumstance further, and that not at all forced and improbable, viz. That he caused some of these young people to lie with him, as David did Abishag, we shall then carry the medicine to its highest pitch, and shall easily apprehend, that during that time of free and copious perspiration, he must have received such a large supply of nutritive spirits as effectually refreshed his nature, and restored, in a great measure, that waste which is occasioned by performing the ordinary functions of life ^P.

WE may add the last degree of force to this manner of reasoning, if we may be permitted to argue from contraries. What is more common than to see a woman advanced in years grow not only brisk and lively, but strong and healthy, by marrying a young husband? She drinks his breath, exhales his spirits, extracts his moisture, and thereby

^P The opinions of many learned physicians might have been cited in support of this doctrine, if we had not been afraid of tiring the reader too much; but if he is extremely inquisitive, he may consult the following writers. Christian. Forman. de fascinat. magic. p. 1014. Borellus cent. iii. observat. 28. Lan. de motu Transpirat. lib. ii. cap. ii. prop. iv. p. 56.

invigorates herself, while the poor man, suffering from the impure contagion of her breath and vapours, and from the malignity of this ill-chosen union, sinks very quickly into apparent weakness, and falls at last into what the common people call a galloping consumption. Strange ! that the death of a young man should result from his marriage with an old woman, and that the taking of a young wife should repair the waste, and prolong the life of an old man ⁹. Yet, so it is, and upon this subject I will venture to set down a remarkable instance from the writings of an unexceptionable witness, one, whose repute for veracity is as well established as his fame for learning in general, and for his particular skill in physic.

THE person I mean is, Peter Lotichius, and the example he gives us, this. A man, upwards of eighty years old, married, after the loss of his first wife, a second, who was but twenty-five; when they had been married about a year, he fell into a very extraordinary and dangerous distemper; he grew at last so weak and low, that his case was judged to be desperate. By degrees, however, he became better, and as his strength encreased, his grey hair

⁹ Our author has very judiciously omitted any instance of this kind, probably for two reasons; first, because every man's memory may supply him with examples; and, secondly, to avoid saying too much on a subject offensive to the fair sex.

and white beard fell off gradually, and his skin likewise began to peel; soon after, a light, strong, hair began to peep through the skin of his head, which, in time, fell down to his shoulders in strong natural curls. His beard came in the same manner, and his face acquired a beautiful and florid complexion; in a word, he became a sound, lusty, and if the expression may be allowed, a young man, which his wife was forced to attest, since she had by him afterwards several fine boys^r. This is an instance much to my purpose, since it proves the prodigious efficacy of human breath, and the matter perspired by a juvenile body. Yet, give me leave to observe, that this extraordinary effort of nature might possibly contribute to shorten the old man's life, who, without the enjoyment of this young woman, might have preserved his constitution many years, and have lived in the perfect fruition of those pleasures peculiar to the mind, and for the enjoyment of which it seems most rational, that life in that state should be prolonged.

THERE is something of the same kind observable in the well known history of the famous English long-liver, Thomas Parre, and these particulars are very curiously distinguished by the great anatomist Bartholin, who set down his account of him, not as a curiosity to please children, but as a singular and

^r Observat. Medic. lib. iv. Observ. 3.

memorable fact, worthy of the attention and consideration of men. This Parre was born at Winnington, in the county of Salop, in 1483, passed his youth there in very hard labour, and, which is as remarkable, in sobriety and chastity. At fourscore he married his first wife Jane, by whom he had two children, neither of which were long lived, or shewed any extraordinary signs of strength; the first died at the age of a month, and the second lived but a few years. At 102 he became enamoured of Katherine Milton, whom he got with child, and did penance in the church for it. Some months before he died, the earl of Arundel brought him up to London, and presented him to king Charles I. but through the change of air, and in his manner of living, he died soon after; though it was believed he might have survived many years, if he had remained in his own country, and led the same life he was wont to do*. This man was over-grown with hair, and during the latter part of his life, slept very much. In the same country lived the famous countess of Desmond, whose age

* Bartholin, Hist. Anatom. cent. v. hist. 28. p. 47, 48. Some accounts make Parre much older, and place his death in 1651; I have consulted his monument in Westminster-Abbey, and there I find he died on the 15th of November 1635, aged upwards of 152; when his body was opened, his bowels appeared very sound, only the lungs were somewhat injured, which was thought to be owing to the grossness of the town air, and that he might have lived much longer, if on his first complaint he had been let blood.

was unknown to herself, but extremely well supported by the authority of others; since from deeds, settlements, and other indisputable testimonies, it appeared clearly, that she was upwards of an hundred and forty, according to the computation of the great lord Bacon, who knew her personally, and remarks this particularity about her, that she thrice changed her teeth ^t. We have it on the credit of Alexander Benedictus, that there was a lady of his acquaintance, who, at the age of fourscore, had a complete new set of teeth; and though her hair had all fallen off before, yet, at the same time she cut her teeth, it grew again, of like colour and strength as at first ^u. Bartholin, the famous anatomist, whom I cited before, furnishes us not only with another example, and informs us it was procured by art; but gives us also the receipt by which it was done, and which he assures us was no other than an extract of black hellebore, dissolved in an infusion of wine and roses ^x. If I mistake not, the illustrious Boyle hath something to the same purpose about the quintessence of balm ^y.

^t Verulam Hist. Vitæ et Mortis. Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World, lib i. cap. v. § 5.

^u Donat. Hist. Med. Mirab. lib. iv. cap. ii. p. 300.

^x Hist. Anatomic. cent. v. hist. 28. p. 51.

^y See his Treatise on Specific Remedies. As to the medicine itself, it was contrived by Paracelsus. But of this more will be said hereafter.

IT may not be disagreeable to the reader, if, for the sake of some new observations, a few instances of both sexes are added to those that were first collected, the rather, because this will plainly shew, that though cases of this nature are both rare and extraordinary, yet they are not to be esteemed prodigies. We are assured, that in the year 1531, there was an old man at Tarentum, in the kingdom of Naples², very poor, and decrepid with age, who on a sudden, if one may be allowed the expression, slipt his skin like a serpent, and both, in appearance and in strength, returned to the age of thirty, or thereabouts. In short, he was so altered in size, in his countenance, complexion, hair, and fleshiness of his limbs, that he was not known to such as had not seen him in the actual state of renovation, which took up some time, and was not performed but with a pretty sharp sense of pain. His change of body did not alter his circumstances, he was still constrained to work hard for his living, which he did for fifty years together, and then grew far more decrepid than before, his skin becoming rough, hard, and discoloured, so that it looked rather like the bark of a tree than the hide of an animal; but how long he continued in this condition, or at what age he died, we are not told.

² *Histoires Admirables et Memorables*, Douay 1604, 8°. p. 697.

WE have it likewise on the credit of a good author ^a, who was himself an eye-witness of what he relates, that the abbess of the monastery of Monviedro, when she was very near a hundred, after a severe sickness, which those about her took to be her last, had those returns of a periodical distemper, which had ceased for above forty years, soon after which her gums began to swell, and a new set of teeth appeared; her hair, which was thin, and milk white, fell off, and was succeeded by a new stock of thick, strong, and black tresses; the wrinkles of her face peeled off, her limbs became plump, and, in every respect, she appeared like a woman of thirty, which brought such a resort of people to the nunnery as made her ashamed, so that she kept her apartment, and refused to see any except her near relations, and particular friends ^b.

IF

^a This relation is taken from the learned Velasquez of Tarentum, who is very circumstantial in it, and who observes that it became a proverb in the neighbouring country, when an old woman gave herself peevish airs, “do you think to have as good luck as the abbess of Monviedro?”

^b It seems highly probable, that none of these changes were the effects either of nature, or of chance; but rather of some accident, which, even by those who suffered them, was not noticed. I say this is highly probable, because if nature, unassisted by art, could produce such changes, it is probable that they would more frequently happen. Now that art can produce them, appears from what friar Bacon says, in recommending a medicine made from

IF we consider these extraordinary relations attentively, and reflect on the weight of evidence, with which some of them, and especially those of Parre, and the countess of Desmond are supported, we must be satisfied, that the human body is a machine capable of very extraordinary changes. For we ought to consider, that if we are once brought

to

from gold to pope Nicholas IV. He largely explains its virtues, and shews particularly how great they are in the cure of the head-ach, palsies, and other disorders, which spring from the brain. He says, that Aristotle thought the life of man could not be preserved by any preparation from gold, because gold itself is perishable, or at least the medicines drawn from it; but our author advises the pope not to believe this, for, says he, this medicine will do admirable things when it is well prepared and thoroughly drawn out. That he might also shew what he meant by this drawing out, he tells his holiness that perhaps the liquor was of that kind, i. e. a tincture of gold, which an old husbandman in the kingdom of Sicily found, as he was ploughing, in a gold vessel. The man it seems was hot and faint, and taking this yellowish water which the vessel contained for a kind of dew, he greedily swallowed it, which so entirely changed his habit of body and complexion, that from an old man of sixty, he became like one of thirty, his judgment, memory, and understanding, growing also much better than they were before; so that of a labouring peasant, he became a courtier, and was advanced to be a gentleman of the bed-chamber to William king of Sicily, in whose service, and that of his successors, I suppose, he lived fourscore years. This fact seems to have been very well known, for our author mentions it thrice; first, in his book of the Secrets of Art and Nature, again in his *Opus Majus*, and lastly, in his book of the Cure of Old Age; and it is from all three relations

to believe that a woman thrice changed her teeth, it is as clear a proof of the possibility of the fact, as if we had twenty other examples. Now, if there be a possibility of renovating human nature, why on the one side should we not study it ? or why on the other should this kind of study be treated as a vain and fanciful thing ? if the office of a physician be honourable ; if there be something noble and god-like in curing diseases, in stopping the progress of pain and misery, and warding off the dart of death for a few years ; there is certainly something much more excellent in the art of renewing the human body ; securing health and vigour, thro' a long course of years ; keeping not only death, but his younger brethren, age, and decrepidness, at a distance. Let us remember, upon this occasion, what I have already cited from the learned monk Bacon ; What, says he, if Aristotle, Plato, Hippocrates, and Galen, were ignorant of this secret ; is that a proof that we shall not attain it ? were they not ignorant of many other secrets that are now commonly known ; why

that I have collected the several circumstances before-mentioned. This agrees very well with what the learned Boyle tells us, he received from a very curious enquirer into secrets of this nature, of his having prepared a medicine, recommended by Paracelsus, which, without explaining its nature, he gave to an old woman, to whom soon afterwards those accidents happened, which preceded the wonderful renovation of the lady abbess mentioned in the text ; but the last mentioned old woman was exceedingly frightened, and refused to take the medicine any longer.

then

then should we imagine the barrier of science fixed here, rather than any where else? why should we not find out the means of prolonging life, as well as a method for squaring the circle? is not the former of as great consequence to us as men? or is the latter a more useful proof of the strength of human understanding? Let us proceed then; let us collect and compare (since the nature of the thing forbids other experiments) such examples as we meet with in authentic histories; and let us in this, as in other cases, labour to convert history into science, by observing nicely the particulars in every relation, and endeavour thereby to trace out the manner of nature's working; for if this can be once done, we shall be soon able to follow her steps. If nature at any time vouchsafes this favour to men, it follows, that their bodies have no incapacity of receiving it; that is to say, if every man's body was not so constituted as to exceed by far the ordinary limits of life, it could not possibly happen that any man's life should be so extended.

FATHER Maffeus, who wrote a celebrated history of the Indies, which has been always esteemed a perfect model, in point of veracity, as well as the elegance of its composition, gives us the following account, after having related the death of the Sultan of Cambaya, and the conquest of his kingdom by the Portuguese. "They presented, says he, at this
" time to the general, a man born amongst the anci-

“ ent Gangards, who are now called Bengalars, who
 “ was 335 years of age. There were various cir-
 “ cumstances which took from this account all suspi-
 “ cion of falshood. In the first place, his age was
 “ confirmed by a kind of universal tradition, all the
 “ people averring that the oldest men in their in-
 “ fancy spoke of this man’s age with astonishment ;
 “ and this old man had then living in his own house,
 “ a son of ninety years old. In the next place, his
 “ ignorance was so great, and he was so absolutely
 “ void of learning, that this removed all ground of
 “ doubt, for by the strength of his memory he was
 “ a kind of living chronicle, relating distinctly,
 “ and exactly, whatever had happened within the
 “ compass of his life, together with all the circum-
 “ stances relating to it. He had often lost and re-
 “ newed his teeth ; his hair, both on his head and
 “ beard, grew insensibly grey, and then as insensibly
 “ turned black again. The first age of his life he
 “ passed in idolatry ; but for the two last centuries
 “ of his life had been a Mohammedan. The sul-
 “ tan had allowed him a pension for his subsis-
 “ tence, the continuance of which he begged from
 “ the general ; the same motive remaining, which
 “ had first induced the king of Cambaya to grant
 “ him a subsistence, that is to say, his great age, and
 “ the extraordinary circumstances that had attend-
 “ ed his life, these prevailed on the general to grant
 “ his request °.” Thus far Maffeus.

° Historiarum Indicarum, lib. xi. c. 4.

BUT as it may be very easily conceived, that so strange a story as this must have created many enquiries, and have either sunk in the world, or in consequence of those enquiries, received abundance of concurrent testimonies ; I shall therefore beg leave to add some very remarkable particulars in relation to this celebrated long-liver, from the Portuguese historian, Ferdinand Lopez de Castegneda, who was historiographer royal. He tells us that, in the year 1536, there was a man presented to the vice-roy of the Indies, Nunio de Cugna, who was near 340 years old. He remembered that he had seen the city in which he dwelt, and which was then one of the most populous in the Indies, a very inconsiderable place. He had changed his hair, and recovered his teeth four times, and when the vice-roy saw him, his head and beard were black, but the hair weak and thin. He asserted that, in the course of his life, he had seven hundred wives, some of which died, and the rest he had put away. The king of Portugal caused a strict enquiry to be made into this matter, and an annual account of the state of the old man's health, to be brought him by the returns of the fleet from India. This long-lived person was a native of the kingdom of Bengala, and died at the age of 370 ^d. This history is in itself very

^d Hist. Lusitan. lib. viii.

curious, founded upon good authority, and therefore transcribed from the authors I have mentioned, by many curious and inquisitive persons, who were also proper judges of cases of this nature, and who have none of them intimated any doubt or suspicion as to the matters of fact *. I therefore submit it to the reader's consideration, whether it be not a matter worthy of reflection; that there is a certain strength in the human body, which, assisted by some lucky circumstances, enables it to renovate itself sometimes once, as in the case mentioned by Lotichius; sometimes oftener, as in that of the countess of Desmond, who bred all her teeth thrice; and the native of Bengala, who changed his hair and teeth four times: and there is another circumstance of which I cannot but take notice, as it favours my doctrine very much; that this man who lived to an age much greater than any, for which we have as good authority, had so many wives, to the efficacy of whose breaths, and the insensible effluvia of their wholsome bodies, I should not scruple to attribute in a great measure his extraordinary longevity. These, I say, are points which deserve to be considered, since if such a power there be in the human constitution, we ought not to despair of finding out methods, which may contribute to its manifesting

* Bartholin. Hist. Anatom. cent. v. Hist. 28. p. 46. Camerhor. subfis. cent. II. c. 8. p. 278. Hakewill's Apol. 168.

itself more frequently ; which would be certainly a far greater benefit to mankind, than the bare study of the proper remedies for usual and common distempers. Let me add, that perhaps if such a method could be found, it must also defend our bodies from almost all diseases, by procuring such a vigour as should be able to withstand the entrance of them.

WHAT I have advanced in the way of reasoning, upon this subject, may be very strongly corroborated from a relation which I have lately met with, in a very authentic writer, and a relation which I prefer to all others, from the natural and accurate manner in which it is delivered, from whence I persuade myself that the reader will peruse it with pleasure, since exclusive of the extraordinary facts it contains, it affords the clearest and most concise description of the effects, that follow the slowest and most gentle decay, of which the human body, considered as a machine, is capable, and thereby fully explains the manner in which death is brought on by the advances of old age, when dissolution is no way accelerated, either by intemperance or distempers of any kind. This must be allowed to be very curious, because examples of this nature are rare in all countries, are very seldom examined with that nicety and attention they deserve when they do happen, and if they were so just, and so instructive an instance as that, which we have in this account, is perhaps not to be found in any author whatever.

All

All these circumstances I have thought proper to premise, that the attention of the reader may be awakened, and that he may peruse so extraordinary a piece with that caution and consideration which it deserves. Let us now come to the matter of fact.

CAPTAIN Laudonniere, says my author^f, failed as commodore of a small squadron, consisting only of three little vessels well equipped in the year 1564, for the coast of Florida, where being arrived, the *Sieur d'Ortigny*, his lieutenant, was invited by one of the Indian chiefs to the house of his father, whom he reported to be both one of the ancientest and most considerable persons in the country. This interview was managed with much kindness and civility on both sides; for this was not the first time that the French had been seen in those parts, and the old chief of Florida knew the signification of the word *Amy*, i. e. Friend, which his guests often repeated, at which he was mightily pleased.

WHEN they saw him in this good humour, Mr. *Ortigny* enquired as well as he was able as to his age: when the old man, in answer to this question, signified that he was the ancestor to five generations. He pointed also to another old man who sat over against him, and who seemed to surpass him in years very much. Indeed he very well might, for he was the

^f *Histoire de la Floride* par M. Basannier, p. 95.

father of this venerable old man. The strangers took the pains to examine him attentively, and found him to resemble rather a skeleton covered with skin, than a human creature, still alive; for his nerves, his veins, his arteries, and, in short, all the vessels in his body, of what kind soever appeared so clearly, that they might have been numbered with all the ease imaginable. The wonderful effects of age appeared in other respects still stronger in this decrepid Indian, for he had long before lost his sight, and most of his other faculties were so much impaired, that he could be hardly said to retain any of his senses, yet his speech was not entirely lost; he could utter sounds that were intelligible to those about him, but this was in a low and feeble voice, and accompanied with such pain and difficulty, that he declined it as much as possible, and chose rather to make them sensible of the few things he wanted by signs, to which they were accustomed, and which were immediately obeyed by those that were about him, who seemed to observe him with the utmost reverence, as well as attention^e.

AFTER having contemplated at leisure a sight so very surprising, the *sieur de Origny* returned back

^e It may not be improper to remark, that this must be the same country in which he informs us, a *Saltzburgher* told him, the English found an Indian prince within these twenty years, who remembered the coming of the Spaniards into Florida, and the relation of these facts to each other is a confirmation of the truth of both.

to the young old man (I use the author's own words) and desire him, with the utmost civility, to give him, if possible, a more distinct answer with respect to his age. Upon this, the Indian chief beckoned to some who were waiting at a distance to approach. When they were near him, he struck his hand upon his thigh twice, and then laid it upon the heads of two old men; after that he struck his thigh again, and laid his hand upon others, and repeating this action five times, and then placed his descendants before them, that they might consider them at leisure. They did so, and by observing the difference of their looks, the colour of their hair, and other circumstances, they conjectured, that it might be very possible, that the younger of the two old men might be upwards of two hundred.

THIS is the relation I promised, delivered precisely in the terms of my author, and I look upon it as the fullest and most authentic account of the extent of human life, from the natural advantages of a fine climate, great temperance, continual exercise, &c. and renders it very evident that long-life, simply considered, and without the assistance of some method, either to retard, or to qualify its inconveniences, ought by no means to be esteemed a blessing; for what kind of death could the most barbarous tyrant invent, that would be so cruel, in the consideration of a reasonable person, as the lingering torments of such a living death, as the oldest of these
old

old men went through ? But still this is an unanswerable argument in the support of our fundamental principle, that the human body is a machine that may be sustained much longer than is commonly imagined. This may be done, either by natural or by artificial means. As to the first of these methods, we have found it where we should have sought it, with the greatest probability, that is, amongst savages, who, as they have animal life, and the pleasures of the body only in view, so these, according to the oeconomy of Providence, lead to the utmost extension of life, of which, from the nature of its structure, the human body, as a machine, is capable, and perhaps only capable, in such a climate, and from such a way of living ^b.

BUT as we are very sensible that, with respect to machines, though they cannot outlast the materials of which they are composed, but must gradually

^b The difference between the assistances afforded by nature, are very well set forth by our author, and he very justly insists upon the climate as the chief. It is observed by lord Bacon, that in mountainous countries the people live long, and the famous professor Boerhaave was wont to observe, in his lectures, that he was well informed, that a certain Dutchman, who had built himself a house on the top of a very high mountain, at the Cape of Good-Hope, lived there in the enjoyment of a healthy old age, beyond the knowledge or remembrance of any of the colony : such is the benefit of nature, but if we could perfectly discover whence, with respect to its operation on the body, the differences in air arise, we might possibly do somewhat in this respect by art, without scaling of mountains, or going to the Cape of Good-Hope.

waste and decay by the action of the several parts of those materials upon each other; yet by the assistance of art, even these materials may not only be made to last longer than they would otherwise do, but also to perform their offices with greater facility, and with fewer inconveniencies, than if they were unskilfully managed. The watches of Tompion, Quare, or even of Graham, who has carried his art so much beyond any of his predecessors, will be subject to go wrong, to be injured, and at length spoiled, and that perhaps in a very short time in the hands of ignorant persons, such as children, and women; that, in the custody of prudent and careful people, might be preserved in perfect order for an age or two, at least; though, in spite of all the assiduity and caution possible, they would at last wear out. Hence, by parity of reason, we may discern how the machine of the body might be in like manner defended, both from external injuries, and internal decay, if a right method was once settled for that purpose; and that method pursued with proper diligence and attention. Such a method however is not to be looked for amongst savages, but amongst the wisest, most learned, and politest nations, and even in them, amongst those only the most famed for prudence and knowledge ¹.

IT

¹ It may be observed in support of what is advanced in the text, that there are no two nations in the world so anxious about the preservation of life as the Italians and the Chinese; but, notwithstanding this, it does not appear that they have made any very

It is a thing, in some measure, amazing how strangely, and how simply, the curiosity of mankind is commonly employed. We visit fine palaces, beautiful gardens, and such collections of rarities as become famous; and in surveying these, we seem to be very diligent and circumspect; so that if called upon at a great distance of time, we can give very satisfactory accounts of the size of any of these magnificent buildings, the materials of which they are composed, the disposition of their several parts, the advantages that arise from thence, and at least the most apparent defects. In the gardens again, we note the walls, the walks, the wilderesses, the herbs, flowers, trees, canals, pavilions, &c. In those repositories we can tell, upon reflection, what curious books there are, what antique statues, what excellent pictures, and by what famous hands, what medals, and, in a word, whatever they contain. But how few are there that employ this curiosity, which is so capable not of extending only to such a va-

very great progress in the science. Though there are abundance of rational things in the treatise of Cornaro, and many good rules might perhaps be picked out of the aphorisms of the Chinese physicians; yet, after all, they go no farther than giving wise cautions to prevent the wasting of life; whereas the great thing to be sought, is a method of recruiting it. A lamp will not burn so soon, if protected from the air, as in a place where it is exposed to the wind; but it would still continue burning much longer, if constantly supplied with oil, though the vessel and the wick were the same.

riety of subjects, but of preserving them also, so as to have them constantly ready for entertainment, or for use; I say, how few exercise this curiosity upon their own bodies, so as to become, in any tolerable degree, acquainted with the nature of the structure, the disposition of its parts, and the relation they have to each other; curiosity is doubtless a noble faculty of the soul, and is it not surprising that she should exercise it every where but at home? that with the foolish giddiness of a young heir laden with money, and light in wit, she should long to travel abroad, and run great risks to see strange sights at a distance, without ever reflecting to how much better purpose her time and talents might be spent, in taking a close view of her own concerns, in making a thorough enquiry into the title by which she holds her possessions, and procuring an exact inventory of her own effects. It is for want of this, that like the travelling spendthrift, she finds herself frequently called off, from following, at a vast intellectual expence, pleasures totally foreign to her, to come and die a beggar at home. Health and happiness are the great concerns of every man, we naturally wish these to our friends, and desire them for ourselves; we think of them with pleasure, we speak of them with rapture, and yet we very seldom seek them as we ought ^k.

I HAVE

^k We may easily satisfy ourselves, as to the truth of this, by considering what prodigious improvements have been made in anatomy and physic during the two last centuries. But what this

I HAVE declined, as yet, speaking of long-lived animals, upon which, however, the great lord Bacon has insisted much. Apollonius, if we may believe the writer of his life, discovered in Mount Caucasus an extraordinary secret in natural history. There are apes there, it seems, which feed upon a kind of pepper, and these apes are eaten by old lions, to renew their strength and make them young¹. I must confess, I suspect this to be rather an allegory than a fable, and I should incline to interpret it thus; that lofty and ambitious spirits over-act the bodies in which they inhabit, and induce a premature old age, if this effect be not prevented by frequently unbending their spirits in the company of humorous and diverting people, who are well enough marked out by apes well seasoned. Thus Agesilaus, the famous king of Sparta, when he was extremely old, amused himself by playing with young children. The great Scipio diverted himself in the company of Terence, and Augustus had always about him the most sprightly wits of Rome. Cardi-

this writer chiefly aims at, is to engage the reader's observation, as to the small pains taken by the generality of people; even of those who would be thought knowing and sensible, to make themselves so far acquainted with the nature of the human oeconomy as to be able to take care of themselves. It is a very common, but for all that, no idle saying, that every man at forty is either a fool or a physician, that is, with regard to himself; but I doubt, reckoning thus, the fools would carry it upon any contest, against the physicians; by a very great majority.

¹ Philostrat. in vit. Apollon. Tyan. lib. iv. c. i.

nal Richlieu had funk under the fatigues of his ministry, if from time to time he had not been relieved by the humorous buffoonry of Boisrobert. Lewis XIV. was as delicate in his amusements as great in his councils, and shewed as true judgment in approving a play of Moliere's, as a project of Louvois. We are not therefore to understand the antients literally, when they deliver to us those stories which appear to us incredible. But to return to long-lived animals.

It is certain that eagles arrive at a great age, and that they preserve, almost as long as they live, that prodigious strength which distinguishes them from other birds. We know too, that the eagle renews his plumage annually, and it is not easy to conceive how this should be done without a total change of its juices. The stag is another long-lived animal, though I cannot believe many of the stories that are told about it. I mention it only, that I may observe that it annually cast its horns, which is another proof of the renewal of animal juices. But this is still more conspicuous in the viper, which in the spring casts its coat, and comes abroad youthful as the year. If the eagle, the stag, and the viper, were not common to every climate, I make no doubt that the facts related of them would be treated as fables; but as they happen every day, and immediately under our eyes, we are obliged to own them for truths. Yet what use have we made of these truths? who can assign the causes why these animals

live

live longer than others ; or, how it comes to pass, that nature grants them this privilege of juvenescency ? yet such an enquiry might repay our industry abundantly ^m ! It is said, that we learned physick from animals, that dogs taught us the use of emetics, and that birds put us in the head of glitters. If they were our tutors in the lower forms of physick, why should we disdain their instruction in this sublimer part of the science ?

It is not only the inhabitants of the land and air that attain to such vast ages, such as dwell in the waters seem to have still a larger share of life, of which I will give you one well attested instance out of many. In the year 1497, in a fish pond in Suabia, near Huilprin in Germany, they took a carp of a prodigious size, which had in his ear a ring of copper, with these words in Latin. “ I am the first fish that
“ was put into this pond by the hands of Frederick
“ II. governor of the world, the 5th of October
“ 1230.” This carp appeared to have lived 259 years, and probably might have lived much longer, had he not been thus taken out. I cannot apprehend that much use will ever be made of examples of this sort, because fishes live in another medium, and seem to have their lives regulated by laws different from those of other animals ⁿ. We

^m Aldrovand. Ornitholog. Gesner de Avibus, lib. iii. Aristot. de Animalibus.

ⁿ Johnston. Hist. Natur.

may say of them, that if they do not, like the eagle, renew their vigour, yet they seem never to grow old, or, to express myself more clearly, age with them seems exempt from infirmities. The broken claw of a lobster grows again, which, if seriously considered, is very wonderful, and it is generally believed that most fishes grow as long as they live, which, if true, is not easily accounted for.

WHAT I would infer from all these hints, is no more than this, that nature has furnished us with numerous examples of what we seek, long life with the preservation of strength. We see this daily in birds, and in beasts, in fish, and in reptiles, and yet we sit down satisfied that speedy old age, and immature death, belong to us by the law of nature. Where is the justice, where is the consistency of this; especially, if we consider, that the flesh of many long-lived animals has a quality wonderfully restorative? We know that mighty things have been done by feeding upon vipers, and not much less by living upon shell-fish; the bone of a stag's heart is held to be a very high cordial, the reason of which is something singular, and therefore I will take notice of it *. This bone is the strongest proof

* The bone of a stag's heart enters into all the receipts of Bacon the monk, as well as into all those that are mentioned by the Arabian physicians; and as they transcribe Greek authors, it is easy to see that this medicine was of very great antiquity.

of the stag's longevity, for it is nothing else but the root of the aorta, grown bony through a long series of years. We are therefore in the wrong, to take it for granted that nature has passed such a sentence upon us, when the record of experience proves directly the contrary, and when we so plainly see that the seeds of long-life are in long-lived creatures. But we pass this sentence, and execute it upon ourselves. We sit down not patient, but dejected, under what we esteem a common calamity, and desire rather to make the most of a short life, than to fatigue ourselves with the study of the means by which it might be prolonged.

I HAD almost forgot an objection which has been started from a supposed law of nature, with respect to animals, viz. that those have their appointed times, and that most of them are but of very short periods; the great lord Bacon hath taken much pains to make this out, though with a better view than the supporting such an objection; but, after all, I very much doubt the matter of fact, viz. that there are any such immutable laws, that animals cannot transgress. For instance, it is said, that the age of a horse, I mean his extreme age, is twenty, or twenty-four; history furnishes us with instances that contradict this. I will mention but one, Mezeray tells us, that a certain duke of Gascogne paid his homage to the king of Burgundy on a horse that was an hundred years old, and which was still vigorous and

full of mettle ^p. But admitting the matter of fact, where lies the force of the objection ? Some animals reach ten, and others, it is confessed, live much beyond a hundred ; what has this to do with the life of man ? why should it prove that we are flinted to fourscore, more than that we have it in our power to live as long as fags and eagles. It may be said, that there is a certain gradation in these periods, and that as each animal has its assigned term, so likewise has man. But we have proved the contrary of this, by all the methods of argumentation yet invented ; we shewed it from scripture, from reason, from experience ; and if all this is not sufficient to baffle a notion founded only on fancy, why, let those who are fond of it enjoy it. I do not think that life ought to be forced upon people, my creed goes no further than this, “ that if we seek we may find, if we knock it will be opened ;” and this I am led to say, because I find it so in other pursuits, where men follow nature, and not their own notions. What mighty discoveries hath the Newtonian philosophy afforded, which had been for ever hid from men, if they had continued to follow the visions of Descartes ? how much more certain the astronomy of our times than that of our ancestors ? yet some say, that all these discoveries are only lost truths revived. Be it so, and let us return to the

^p Histoire Abregé de France, tom. i. p. 401.

search of that truth which was known to Hermippus, and which has been so long lost to us.

IF, therefore, after all that has been said, there remain yet any doubts upon the mind of the reader, we shall endeavour by all means to remove these, as well for the sake of his satisfaction, as that, after so much pains already taken, we may not fail in our attempt, and have this dissertation considered only as a literary amusement; whereas, we intend it as a serious and useful discourse. The ancients, who seem to have studied this matter with the greatest assiduity, and whose opinions, generally speaking, on mature examination, appear not altogether unreasonable to the moderns; observe with respect to the causes of old age, that they are chiefly three. First, the circumambient air, which dries up the natural moisture in man, at the same time that the innate heat of the body consumes it, as the necessary substance on which the flame of life must feed. The second is the toil and motion of the body, which likewise wastes that aerial humidity which is so necessary to health and life; and the last, the passions of the mind, which, according to the sentiments of the learned Avicenna, have greater influence than both the other causes taken together, which will seem extremely reasonable, if we consider how close a connection there is between the passions of the mind, and the motion of the animal spirits, which particularly appears in madness, when we compare the cir-

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cumstances attending it, as a disease of the mind, with those by which it also appears to be a bodily distemper.

SUCH as are acquainted with that mysterious kind of philosophy, which was in the highest credit with the learned vulgar of the last age, and which is now as unreasonably discredited amongst the same people, and regared only by such as enquire after truths, and not received opinions; this philosophy, I say, teaches us, that there is a great correspondence between the body of the earth, and the body of man, whence the patrons of this doctrine were wont to call the latter the little world, and the former the great one. Now, though there is something very fanciful in their way of treating this matter, yet the notion in itself is very just, and whoever examines it carefully, will find that the general laws of the universe, are also the particular laws of all the different kind of bodies in it; and hence it comes to pass, that as man suffers, and is destroyed for want of moisture, so this is like to be the case of the world too, or at least would be the case, if it did not receive foreign supplies; which the judicious Sir Isaac Newton supposes it does from the tails of comets, the watery vapours of which he imagines communicate with our atmosphere for that purpose⁹.

⁹ Philosoph. Natural. Princip. Mathem. lib iii.

THIS we must allow to be a rational and probable account of what for many ages puzzled the understanding of all mankind; and if so wonderful a method as this is, be necessary to supply the earth with moisture, why should we think it strange that a new, and in some measure unaccustomed way, should be the fittest for repairing that humidity, which is so necessary to the well being of the human body. The universe is under the special care and direction of its infinitely wise Creator, who at certain seasons therefore has provided it with such requisite supplies; but the bodies of men are, in this respect, left to their own care, and if the materials be within our own reach, and our faculties are strong enough to discover them, we have no more a right to complain that the secret of preserving long life is not discovered to us, than that the art of baking bread, of melting ores, and refining metals, or indeed any other art, was not revealed to our ancestors in the earliest ages of the world, but left to be the reward of their future industry and sagacity. The furniture of man's mind, and the structure of his body, are both of them such, that if he has any reason to complain, it must be of himself; and his reflections upon Providence are not only impious, but ridiculous. He has it absolutely in his power to be easy and happy, if he pleases. Health will always attend on temperance, steadily pursued, as Galen asserts in his works, and manifested in himself, by living to upwards of an hundred.

hundred, without being attacked either by acute or chronic diseases. Riches are not indeed within every man's reach, but there is something always at hand infinitely more valuable than wealth, I mean content. If to these blessings we would add length of days, why that too, according to this hypothesis is in our power, and depends on our finding out a proper supply of the aerial humidity before-mentioned.

WE have now the clue in our hand, and nothing can hinder us from extricating ourselves from this labyrinth of doubts, about the proper method of obtaining this supply, but our own negligence and want of attention. We ought to remember that heat and moisture are, from the very beginning, the principles of human life. Let us reflect then, and see if we cannot discover whence these principles arise. There is, I think, very little difficulty in this case, that of heat is derived from the male, that of moisture from the female. It is equally unnecessary and unbecoming me to introduce a treatise of generation in a work like this ; it is sufficient that I put my readers in mind, that the enlargement of the foetus in the womb requires a very extraordinary degree of moisture in all respects, and that this is entirely derived to it from its mother. The growth of an infant is surprisngly quick, and this is owing to the strength of the vital flame, the constant supply of a proper humidity, and the not being exposed to those

those accidents which have been before-mentioned, I mean the action of the circumambient air, bodily motion, and the passions of the mind, from all which, children, while in the womb, are in a great measure free. This, I think, is so extremely clear, and plain, that it is simply impossible for a man to be in any perplexity about it, and therefore I shall proceed to the next stage of life, and enquire into the method which is therein pursued by nature.

IN the state of infancy, there is likewise an extraordinary provision necessary of this humid matter, not only sufficient for performing the ordinary functions of animal life, but also to facilitate the growth of the child, and this too proceeds from the mother. Nature has furnished her with breasts, and with milk, which is the most suitable nutriment, that, under such circumstances, the human body can receive; and in extreme old age, when the body is a second time reduced to the feebleness of infancy, milk and especially women's milk, is found to be of very great use, and, in consumptive cases also, is allowed to be a most admirable restorative. Hence, I think, it plainly appears that the radical moisture, so necessary to supply the flame of life, and to keep it not only alive, but vigorous and clear, is to be sought in woman. I foresee one great objection that may be made to this, viz. that I insist not on the breath or effluvia of women, but of virgins. Yet weigh the cases thoroughly, and you will find all that I have advanced

advanced very consistent. The nourishment of a child in the womb, and an infant at the breast, is a nourishment no way fit for persons in years, and therefore I approve what Bacon delivers from the Arabian physicians, viz. that milk is an improper diet for old men. This hinders not its being useful when people are quite worn out, for that may furnish strength to a dying flame, that would be of no service to a lamp in its ordinary situation. Persons in the last stage of life are frequently emaciated, and in this case milk may help; but still, as there is a wide difference between the natural and gradual decay of the human body, and what the physicians call a consumption, there must be consequently a difference in their cure. Thus, from certain and almost self-evident principles, I have established the reasonableness of this proposition, that the breath and insensible perspiration of virgins in a young and healthy state, must be very salutary for old men, and may very probably be a means of protecting them from those infirmities which usually attend an advanced age. Now, in respect to this, it matters not at all, whether the inscription I set out with be founded in truth or not, neither is it requisite to believe that I have hit exactly on the method used by Hermippus. The single point in question is, whether I have shewn that sense, in which I take this inscription, to be agreeable to the dictates of reason, and the laws of nature; and

as to this, every reader must decide for himself. Before he does this, there is another sort of evidence that he ought to hear, and which for the sake of truth, I shall readily produce.

THERE are two sorts of people whose interest it is particularly to decry this doctrine, on a supposition that it is destructive of their own, to which they are prodigiously, and perhaps unreasonably, addicted : I mean the astrologers and hermetic philosophers. I shall examine what both may object, rather for the entertainment and satisfaction, than for the conviction of the wiser part of the world, who are already well enough apprised of the credit due to these virtuosi; and when I have done this, I shall draw to a speedy conclusion, from an assurance that nothing more can be necessary to establish the probability of this method for preserving health and life, and for defending our bodies from the infirmities of old age as long as their constitutions will permit.

THE modern patrons of astrology, for such it seems there are, will probably pretend that this notion of Hermippus was a mere fancy, and that if he really reached to an age so advanced, it was not through the assistance derived from the breath of virgins, but from the happy position of the heavenly bodies at the time of his birth. It is, however, lucky for
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me, that they can never make good this objections because I presume their art will not furnish them with the means of constructing any scheme of his nativity. I know they may plead the author of Thomas Aquinas^r, and other great men who have given in to these opinions. I know too that they may produce some extraordinary instances of the verification of astrological predictions; especially those of Basil, who was so famous at Florence, and of La Brosse, at Paris, who were particularly happy in guessing at future events, and in having their predictions recorded by historians of credit.

THE former of these foretold to Cosmo de Medici, then a private citizen at Florence, that he would attain some very high dignity, is as much as the ascendant of his nativity was adorned with the same propitious aspects, as those of the emperors Augustus, and Charles V. had been; and he was accordingly raised to the dukedom of Tuscany, in the month of January 1434^s. The same Greek astrologer did, with equal capacity, foretell the death of prince Alexander de Medici, and this with such confidence, as to paint out the persons by whose hand he should

^r One strong passage, among many in his writings, runs thus, Qui sciret virtutes cælorum et stellarum dum res aliqua nascitur posset judicare de natura rei, licet hoc necessitatem non imponat, et posset impediri per accidens. D. Tho. secundo de generatione.

^s Dinoth. Memorab. lib. vi. p. 390.

die, and whom he affirmed to be that prince's intimate and familiar friend; of a slender habit of body, a small face, and swarthy complexion, and who, with a reserved silence, was almost insociable to all persons in the court; by which description he did almost point out with the finger Laurence de Medici, who murdered prince Alexander in his bed-chamber, contrary to all the laws of consanguinity and hospitality, in the year 1537¹. But the great misfortune is, that in those days it was shrewdly suspected, that these pretended sages had better and more certain methods of penetrating into conspiracies than are afforded by astrological means; and I must confess myself inclined to suspect, from the very manner in which this prediction was delivered, that Basil was employed to caution prince Alexander against his cousin Lawrence, and that for want of penetration, he fell into that snare which he might otherwise have avoided.

THE instance of La Brosse is more to the purpose, because better supported; indeed I think that it is one of the best attested stories of its kind. The baron de Biron, afterwards the famous marshal of that name, being under some difficulty about a duel, went to La Brosse, and carried him a scheme of his nativity, but told him it was that of a friend of his; the astrologer having considered the scheme, assur-

¹ Jovii Elog. p. 320.

ed him, that the person whose nativity it was would infallibly be a great man; nay, that he might even come to be a king, but for the caput algol, pointing to the figure of the dragon's head in the scheme. M. de Biron, who did not understand the term, insisted on a clearer account; why then, replied La Brosse, through a desire of being a king, this man will do something that will cost him his head. Provoked at which answer, the baron beat him unmercifully; but he lived to fulfil his prediction, having his head cut off, as all the world knows, for a conspiracy against Henry IV. ^u.

It has been, I hear, suggested, that I deliberately left out of this collection, an instance that made most against my system, by clearly proving that astrology is not so incertain a thing as some represent it, and that as the able men in that science cannot only predict the time, but the manner of the person's death, therefore all that I have advanced becomes very doubtful and precarious, at least when brought into comparison with the dictates of this infallible science. I might alledge various things in disproof of this charge, such as that I have not declared in direct terms against astrology, denied its having any principles, or derided such as have either studied it, or given credit to those who were conversant in its doctrines. But because I love to go to the bottom

^u Invent. Gen. de France, par M. de Serres, p. 1051.

of things, I am desirous that my readers should be acquainted with all that can be said on any side the question; I will produce this very relation which I am said to have concealed, and that with all the advantages that it derives from the skill of the ingenious person from whom I received it, with a challenge to answer it *.

Antiochus Tibertus was one of the most famous astrologers of the fifteenth century, and though his death was very unhappy, yet it ought to render his memory immortal. He was a native of the town of Catena in Romagna. A certain officer carried him to Paris, where he studied, and there following the bent of his genius, he applied himself to the occult sciences, or rather to all the branches of that secret and curious art, which is generally called natural magick. He believed it had been decryed, from its having been mostly in the hands of bold, ignorant, and profligate people, and he thought to restore its credit, by giving it all the ornaments and advantages that could be possibly derived from physic, mathematics, natural philosophy, history, and the fine arts, of which he was a perfect master. The pains he took in this respect, were attended with rather more success than he promised himself; so that before he quitted France, he had acquired a very high reputation, and

* Les Anecdotes de Florence; ou l'Histoire Secrete, de la Maison de Medicis, p. 318.

was considered as the man best skilled in every kind of divination, to which there wanted not a multitude of pretenders at that time.

UPON his return to his native country, where that sort of knowlege was in the highest credit, he found it necessary, for his own security, to ingratiate himself with some of the petty tyrants, or little princes, that were possessed of the several cities and territories in Italy, nor was it long before he gained the confidence of Pandolfo Malatesta, at that time sovereign of Remini, with whom he lived in the greatest ease and credit^y. His reputation was quickly raised to such a height, as well by the curious books he published on the principles of chyromancy, phy-

^y It will not be improper to put the reader in mind that, at this juncture, when almost all the fruitful country of Italy was cantoned out amongst a multitude of pretty tyrants, this spirit of divining, and of giving credit to divination, was at its greatest height; neither is it in the least difficult to discern the cause of this. When the spirits of mankind are broken and dejected, as must always be the case, when they languish under slavery, they cannot but incline to find out, by any means, when the great evils they suffer shall have an end; and on the other hand, as tyrants are constantly jealous and suspicious, they too are excessively prone to pry into the rolls of destiny, to learn, if possible, whence their danger may come, and of whom, amongst all they fear, they have most reason to be afraid. We need not be surpris'd, therefore, that in such conjunctures, astrologers, necromancers, and figure-fingers, are in credit; for bad men only are solicitous about their fortune, the good find occupation sufficient in regulating their morals.

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hognomy, and pyromancy, as by the happy verification of many of his predictions, that his house was continually thronged, either with visitors, who were persons of distinction, or clients that came to him for advice; so that in a very short time he acquired a competent fortune, and as he was esteemed, courted, and beloved, by persons of the highest rank, he might well have promised himself a comfortable journey through life, and a peaceable passage out of it, in a good old age. But fate, it seems, had otherwise decreed, nor were the decrees of fate any secrets to Antiochus Tibertus. In a word, he has established his fame with posterity, upon three incontestable predictions, one with respect to his most intimate friend, another in regard to himself, and the third relating to the prince who was his patron, all of them highly improbable at the time they were delivered, all inscrutable by the rules of human policy, or prudence, and yet all exactly accomplished.

THIS friend of his was Guido de Bogni, one of the greatest captains of his time, as well as one of the bravest and boldest men that ever lived. He was very earnest with Tibertus, to reveal to him the secret of his destiny, and after consulting the lines in his hand, this great master of his art declared, that he would certainly lose his life by the hand of one of his best friends, upon an ill-grounded suspicion. Some time after this, Tibertus calculated his own nativity, and made no scruple of declaring,

that he should lose his head upon the scaffold. His patron Pandolfo de Malatesta would likewise have his fortune told, which Tibertus would willingly have declined, but finding that impracticable, he would not hazard his own credit, and that of his art, by telling him a falsity; and therefore, tho' he was at that time the richest prince in all Italy, he ventured to acquaint him, that, after suffering great want, he would die in the common hospital at Bologna. Not long after this, Guido de Bogni was made commander in chief of the forces of Pandolfo de Malatesta, upon which the count de Bentivoglio, who was father-in-law to that prince, wrote him a letter, in which he assured him, that he had made a shepherd of the wolf, and that Bogni was actually intriguing with the pope, and had promised to deliver up the city of Remini whenever he desired it. The tyrants of Italy were never men of much ceremony, and therefore Malatesta, as soon as he had this information, made a great entertainment, to which he invited all his favourites, and amongst the rest, Guido de Bogni and Tibertus. At this supper Guido was stabbed, and as it was suspected that Tibertus, from his great intimacy with him, might have some share in, or at least knowlege of, the conspiracy, he was thrown into a dungeon, and loaded with irons ^z.

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^z One sees from hence, that the hatred of tyrants is very little, if at all more dangerous than their friendship. It is the maxim of a famous Chinese philosopher, and a maxim that deserves to be

It may be easily conceived, that our astrologer passed his time but unpleasantly in this dismal situation, and therefore one cannot be at all surprised that he should lay hold of the first opportunity of making his escape. It seems the goaler, to whose care Tibertus was committed, had a daughter of a milder and more compassionate disposition than might have been expected, considering the fire from whom she sprung. To this fair damsel the sage addressed himself in this time of his distress, and so effectually wrought upon her gentle heart, that she agreed to furnish him with the means of breaking out of his dungeon into the castle ditch, from whence he might easily escape. In the mean time, count Bentivoglio had discovered that the information he gave his son-in-law was ill founded, and of this he sent him an account, as soon as it was in his power. Malatesta was infinitely astonished and affected with this news. It was impossible to recal his unfortunate general, Guido de Bogni, from the grave, but he gave immediate orders for setting Tibertus at liberty.

be written in letters of gold; "Be not obliged by the wicked." It is impossible to run a greater hazard than he does, who receives good turns from a bad man, because, some time or other, it must bring him under this dilemma, that either he must do an unbecoming action, or draw upon himself the imputation of ingratitude. The wisest of the ancient philosophers were, for this reason, afraid of the caresses of tyrants, and chose rather to live in virtuous poverty, than to receive wealth from those who acquired it by iniquity.

Those who brought the orders came just at the fall of night, and precisely at the time that the astrologer had forced his passage into the ditch, where, after a little search, they found him. When this was reported to the tyrant, his suspicions returned upon him with redoubled violence, and recollecting at the same time the prediction of Antiochus, that he should be deprived of his principality before his death, he concluded, that the first information could not be groundless; but that without doubt, the astrologer must be embarked in some such pernicious design. To free himself therefore from these apprehensions, he gave orders that the next morning Antiochus Tibertus should be beheaded before the prison gate; and thus the second prediction was verified, as well as the first, in a manner equally strange, and out of the reach of human foresight to penetrate, unassisted by the rules of art. Let us now proceed to the third, which happened not long after.

It is to be observed, that tho' the intelligence of the count de Bentivoglio proved false, with respect to the persons concerned, which very probably was the effects of his own conjecture, yet his information was right enough in the main; for a conspiracy was actually carrying on to put Remini into the hands of the pope, and it was accordingly seized by the duke de Valentinois not long after; but, in the confusion which this occasioned, Pandolfo Malatesta made his escape. He fled for some time from place to place, vigorously

vigorously prosecuted by his enemies, and meeting, as is generally the case of tyrants, with very few friends; at length, having endeavoured to sow dissension amongst his own children, he was abandoned by them, and consequently by every body else, insomuch, that falling ill of a languishing disease at Bologna, where no body cared to take him in, he was at last carried to the hospital, where he dragged out the remainder of his days in penury and pain, and at last died of his disease as Tibertus had foretold.

SUCH is the relation which, it is said, I would have suppressed; but whoever considers it maturely, will, I am persuaded, see no great cause to justify such a supposition. There is nothing in my system that carries things so far as to pretend to avert such strange strokes of fortune, or to secure men from violent death; so that in this respect none of these histories, how well attested soever, affect any thing that I have advanced. As to the skill of Antiochus Tibertus, I can say nothing to it, except this, that it is a very singular, and, at the same time, a very useless science, that teaches men the discovery of their own and other people's misfortunes, and, at the same time, affords them no light how to avoid them. I might likewise add, if I had an inclination to fall out with the astrologers, that even these are no decisive proof as to the certainty of this science; for very learned divines have asserted, that Providence sometimes suffers vain predictions to be ful-

filled, as a just punishment on those who pretend to penetrate into the secrets of heaven, or who place a confidence in such pretenders ^a. Now, to say the truth, if we consider how closely suitable judgments pursue

^a It would be no difficult thing to assemble a multitude of historical facts in support of that sentiment, which, tho' our author will not undertake to defend, he seems plainly enough to approve. One good instance, however, may do as well as twenty, and it so falls out, that a very remarkable one is to be met with very near the time in which the celebrated Tibertus flourished. The cardinal Adrian de Corneto made a very considerable figure in the court of Rome, under the pontificate of Leo the tenth. He was a native of the town from whence he took his name, but his parents were so poor, that what his true name was, appears not from history. A schoolmaster gave him his learning gratis, and he improved this so well, that he passed through all stations as an ecclesiastic, without any other recommendation than his merit. After attaining the purple, he went to visit his native town, and hearing of a magician that was very famous, who lived in a cottage in the midst of the Appennines, he disguised himself in the habit of an artificer, and went to consult him. He carried with him the horoscopes of several persons with whom he was intimately acquainted, and the astrologer having answered with surprising accuracy, in reference to these people, he at length put his own horoscope into his hand, and asked him what he thought might befall the person to whom it belonged. The wizard considered it a little, and then replied, if this be the nativity of a man, he will certainly be a cardinal, if of a woman, she will be very near a throne, if she does not sit on one. This was enough upon that head. Corneto changed the subject, by asking him how long he thought the pope would live, and who would succeed him? The pope, returned the artist, is young, but he will not live long for all that; his death will occasion a great faction, but

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purſue almoſt every kind of habitual crimes, and how often predictions are fulfilled by their own conſequences, we ſhall find it no very eaſy matter to refute the opinion of theſe divines, which, however, I do not undertake to maintain; all I pretend to ſay farther on this head, is no more than this, that the curioſity and vigilance of the learned, in the two laſt ages, though they have contributed ſo much to the improvement of geometry, aſtronomy, and phyſic, have been ſo far from doing the like ſervice to aſtrology, that, on the contrary, they have brought it into general diſcredit, from whence I am perſuaded, that it will not be very ſuddenly retrieved, though I am not ignorant that, ſecretly, it is ſtill but too much conſided in by many.

at length the cardinals will chooſe on of their brethren, whoſe name is Adrian, a man of mean birth, who has riſen through all the dignities of the church, purely by his own merit; who has but one benefice at the time of his election, and who will be then preciſely in the ſixtieth year of his age. As there was no perſon in the ſacred college of the name of Adrian at that time but himſelf, and as this prediction ſuited him in every particular, Corneto took it for granted that he was the perſon, and moſt ungratefully entered into a conſpiracy againſt pope Leo, who was both his patron and his prince; which being diſcovered, he was forced to fly into his own country, diſguiſed in the habit of a carpenter, where he ſuffered all the want and miſery he deſerved. The prediction, however, in every circumſtance, was fulfilled in the famous cardinal Adrian, who was preceptor to the emperor Charles the fifth, and who at this time was not honoured with the purple.

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YET, however, these sort of notions have been discountenanced by the prevailing of experimental philosophy, and true science ; where a prince gives ear to his own praises, there will never be wanting such as will adopt astrological schemes, as well as other methods, to sooth his vanity. Nothing is easier than to give such a turn to a piece of this nature ; men of sprightly parts know how to dress up the face of heaven upon such an occasion, and to dispose properly of all the signs and planets, so as to raise mighty expectations in the world, as well as the highest pleasure in the mind of the prince they flatter.

SUCH were the favourable influences of the celestial orbs, at the birth of the late Lewis XIV. king of France. The genethliac system may be seen in one of the medals that compose the history of that reign. The gentlemen of the royal academy of inscriptions have calculated the precise position of the planets, at the moment of the birth of that prince ; round about this curious medal, one sees the twelve signs of the Zodiac, forming the twelve houses, of this system the seven planets appear in the same degrees they occupied at that time ; the sun which gives perfection to the other planets, is in the mid heaven ; Mars, the lord of the ascendant, in reception with Jupiter, the protector of life, and this is what they call the greater fortune ; Saturn, the enemy of nature,

ture, is in his dignities, which makes him less malevolent; the Moon is in conjunction with Venus and Mercury, in his little house of predilection, to ten degrees of the sun out of combustion, and enlightened by his rays, gives a superiority of genius in the most difficult and most important enterprizes, which his being in quartile with Mars, is not capable to abate. The nativity of Lewis XIV. was figured in the middle of the medal, by a rising-sun, the king is placed in the chariot of that glorious planet of which Ovid has given us the description. This chariot is drawn by four horses, guided by Victory, the inscription is in these words: *Ortus Solis Gallici*, "The rising of the Gallic sun;" and the exergue contains these other Latin words: *Septembris quinto, minutis 38 ante meridiem, 1638.* "The 5th of September, 38 minutes before noon, 1638."

I MUST confess, that this is a pretty contrivance, and ingeniously put together; yet I dare say, that none of the learned gentlemen concerned in framing this medal ventured to predict any of the clouds that obscured their sun. No, they were too great courtiers for that. But if this famous medal gives reputation to astrology, I shall venture to lay down a few observation, which will free my doctrine from all inconveniences. I observe then, that as the happiest nativities admit of natural causes, to co-operate in bringing about what they portend, so it is not at all improbable that, if by some lucky accident we
could

could gain a sight of the horoscope of Hermippus, it would shew us that Mercury, well posited at the time of his birth, and beheld by Luna with a favourable aspect, caused his discovery of this mighty secret, and enabled him to make such a use of the breath of virgins, that no man ever thought of before. If the astrologers are content to grant me this, I am willing to compromise the matter, and which, I think, is as much as they can expect, to allow this doctrine of his and mine to be derived from the stars. But, if they are so tenacious of their own notions, as not to accept of so fair an offer, I shall recur to my first principles, and deny absolutely the certainty of their art, and demand as good reasons for the credit of astrology as I have produced in favour of my own system, before I enter the lists with them. Affirmation is nothing in this age, wherein men expect proofs for every thing. Let them shew us then that they can predict an earthquake, whirlwind, or so much as an irruption of mount *Ætna*; nay, let them but mark the rainy and fair days for a whole year, in any climate in Europe, and I will be content that their assertions weigh down my evidence; and that the long-life of Hermippus shall be ascribed to a happy conjunction of humid stars in the sign *Virgo*, which was the interpretation once offered me by a learned astrologer of this inscription, and which, together with my own sentiments, I freely submit to the judgment of the impartial reader.

SUCH

SUCH as seek after truth, disguise nothing, and are so far from being afraid of seeing their opinion canvassed, and even refuted, that, on the contrary, nothing pleases them better, because they are still gainers by the dispute; since, when truth is once discovered, they have as much right to it as he who found it. In the present case, if this treatise of mine should stir up any wiser man to look for a better solution of the problem I have stated, and he should luckily fall on the genuine method of Hermippus, he could not rejoice at it more than I, nor would he find any one more willing to own, or to applaud his ingenuity. Let us read, let us meditate, let us dispute, but all for the sake of truth, which is the great property of mankind, constitutes all our happiness, and which it is therefore our common interest to pursue. The point I have now in view is to discover the means of prolonging life, without feeling the infirmities of age; to the discovery of which, if the publication of this treatise shall any way contribute, not my end only, but the end of mankind is answered, and a most noble point of science will be illustrated, from what many might at first esteem an idle dispute.

I SHALL not treat the hermetic philosophers altogether so briskly as I have done the astrologers; because, without doubt, there have been amongst them many very excellent persons. I cannot take
upon

upon me to say when they began to lay claim to the universal medicine, by which they pretend to preserve life for many centuries, at least, of which they say Artephius was an instance, who lived by the use of it to the age of 300, or, as some say, above 1000. This is certain that the society of Rosicrucians openly claimed it as one of the privileges of their illustrious body. Peter Mormius, who, for ought I know, was one of the last of them that appeared in public, reduced their high pretensions, which at first were very extensive, to the possession of three secrets. Of these the first was the perpetual motion; the second, the art of transmuting metals; and the third, the universal medicine. In the book published by this Mormius, there are abundance of curious things, tho' he does not sufficiently explain himself especially upon the last subject ^b. It is, however, well enough known that these Illuminati asserted, that they had a power of prolonging their lives for many ages; nor is it very clear from their writings, whether what they are pleased to call the philoso-

^b This Mormius went into Holland in the year 1630, where he demanded an audience of the States-general, in order to tender them certain propositions from the fraternity of Rosicrucians, which they refused to hear; this did not, however, hinder Mormius from publishing a treatise under the following title, which is now become a scarce and valuable book. *Arcana totius naturæ secretissima, nec hactenus unquam detecta, a collegio Rosano in lucem produntur, opera Petri Mormii, in 24; Lugduni Batavorum, 1630.*

pher's stone, be not at once the great secret of transmutation, and of the universal medicine.

THE clearest account of this matter that I have ever met with, is in the answer of a French adept, to Doctor Edmund Dickenson, physician to king Charles II. and a profest admirer of the hermetic philosophy. The doctor's letter is very plain and clear. He wrote to a friend of his, in order to be thoroughly informed as to those contrarieties, which he thought he had discerned in the discourses of some of the hermetic sages. His friend gives him a very plausible answer to all his objections, and to enforce the belief of what he lays down, he puts the doctor in mind of his having made projection, that is, his having transmuted base metals into gold, more than once, before the doctor, in the king's laboratory in Whitehall; as to the universal medicine, and its capacity of extending the life of man for many ages, he positively asserts, that it is in the hands of the illuminated brethren, and gives many reasons why they should be so extremely careful in concealing it. He goes so far as to insinuate, that it was in his own possession^c. I must own, I am astonished at such sort of assertions, and more so,
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^c The title of Dr. Dickenson's book referred to by our author, is, *De quinta essentia Philosophorum*. It was printed at Oxford in 1686, and a second time in 1705. There is a third edition

at some relations well attested, that seem to favour the truth of it.

THERE happened, in the year 1687, an odd accident at Venice, that made a very great stir then, and which I think deserves to be secured from oblivion. The great freedom and ease with which all persons, who make a good appearance, live in that city, is known sufficiently to all who are acquainted with it; such will not therefore be surpris'd that a stranger, who went by the name of Signior Gualdi, and who made a considerable figure there, was admitted into the best company, tho' no body knew who, or what he was. He remained at Venice some months, and three things were remarked in his conduct. The first was, that he had a small collection of fine pictures, which he readily shewed to any body that desired it; the next, that he was perfectly versed in all arts and sciences, and spoke on every subject with such readiness and sagacity as astonish'd all who heard him; and it was in the third place observ'd, that he never wrote or received any letter; never desired any credit, or made use of bills of exchange, but paid for every thing in

edition of it printed in Germany in 1721. The author was one of those very great men whose merits are better known abroad than at home; he is mentioned by the learned Olaus Borrichius, and many other foreign writers, with much respect, and just testimonies of esteem for his extensive knowledge.

ready

ready money, and lived decently, tho' not in splendor. This gentleman met one day at the coffee-house with a Venetian nobleman, who was an extraordinary good judge of pictures : he had heard of Signor Gualdi's collection, and in a very polite manner desired to see them, to which the other very readily consented. After the Venetian had viewed Signor Gualdi's collection, and expressed his satisfaction, by telling him that he had never seen a finer, considering the number of pieces of which it consisted; he cast his eye by chance over the chamber door, where hung a picture of this stranger. The Venetian looked upon it, and then upon him. This picture was drawn for you, Sir, says he to Signor Gualdi, to which the other made no answer, but by a low bow. You look, continued the Venetian, like a man of fifty, and yet I know this picture to be of the hand of Titian, who has been dead one hundred and thirty years, how is this possible? It is not easy, said Signor Gualdi, gravely, to know all things that are possible; but there is certainly no crime in my being like a picture drawn by Titian. The Venetian easily perceived, by his manner of speaking, that he had given the stranger offence, and therefore took his leave. He could not forbear speaking of this in the evening to some of his friends, who resolved to satisfy themselves by looking upon the picture the next day. In order to have an opportunity of doing so, they went to the coffee-house about the time that Signor Gualdi was wont to come thither, and

not meeting with him, one of them, who had often conversed with him, went to his lodgings to enquire after him, where he heard that he set out an hour before for Vienna. This affair made a great noise, and found a place in all the news-papers of that time ^d.

THIS story agrees very well with what is said by Dr. Dickenson's correspondent, who observes, that the adepts are obliged to conceal themselves for the sake of safety; and that having a power not only of prolonging their lives, but also of renovating their bodies, they take care to use it with the utmost discretion, and instead of making a display of this wonderful prerogative, they manage it with the highest secrecy, which he lays down as the true cause of the world's being in so much doubt about the matter. Hence it comes to pass, that though an adept is possessed of greater wealth than is contained in the mines of Peru, yet he always lives in so moderate a manner as to avoid all suspicion, and so as never to be discovered, unless by some unforeseen accident, like that which happened to a famous English artist, who disguised himself under the name of Eugenius Philaethes, and whose true name is said to be Thomas Vaughan, the clearest and most candid writer of all the hermetic philosophers ^e. He tells us of himself,

^d Memoires Historiques, 1687, tom. i. p. 365.

^e The most famous of his pieces is intitled, Introitus apertus ad oclufium regis palatium. This was written originally in English,

in Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts Bay, in Vol. 1.
Page 45.

self, that going to a goldsmith, in order to sell twelve hundred marks of fine silver, the man told him, at first sight, that it never came out of the mines, but was the product of art, as not being of the standard of any nation whatever ; which surpris'd Philalethes so much, that he withdrew immediately, and left the goldsmith in possession of his treasure. This famous man, who certainly was an adept, if ever there was one, led a wandering kind of life, and fell often into great dangers, merely from his possessing this great secret. He was born, as we learn from his writings, about the year 1612, and what is the strangest part of his history, he is believed by those of his fraternity to be yet living, and a person of great credit at Nuremberg affirms, that he conversed with him but a few years ago. Nay, it is further asserted, by all the lovers of hermetic philosophy, that this very Philalethes is the president of the illuminated in Europe, and that he constantly sits as such in all their annual meetings. It is on the one hand true, that there is something wild and incredible in these relations, and yet it is as certain on the other, that several who attest them, are persons of irreproachable character, and even with respect to this Philalethes, he was, according to the report of the great Boyle, and others who knew him, a man of remarkable piety, and of unstained morals. In the English

English, has been translated into almost all the European languages, and is unquestionably the best and clearest book upon the subject that is extant in any tongue.

plantations, he became acquainted with one Starkey, a chemist, before whom he made projection; but finding that Starkey was a vicious and extravagant man, he broke off his acquaintance with him, without communicating any part of his secrets ^f.

BUT it may be said, by such as look upon this whole affair, as an idle and ridiculous thing, and who consider all these relations: however attested, or supported, as mere dreams or visions: I say, it may be alledged by these angry critics, that it is a direct proof of the falshood of their pretensions to long life; that we have distinct accounts of the time when their most celebrated patriarchs, such as Roger Bacon, Raymond Lully, and Basil Valentine died, and were buried. If, therefore, these men could not preserve their own lives, or even protract them beyond the ordinary extent, what probability is there, will these people say, that any of the fraternity should prolong their lives in the manner they relate? In answer to this, the adepts always insinuate, that if these great men died, it was by their own choice; and that many of their fraternity still decline that

^f This George Starkey was originally an apothecary, had a head turned to chemistry, but managed his affairs so ill, that he was obliged to transport himself to the plantations, where he became acquainted with Philalethes, of which acquaintance he boasts much in his writings. In 1658, he published a book of chemistry at London, which was translated into French in 1706, and into High Dutch in 1712.

length of life their art would enable them to enjoy. This, I must confess, is an unsatisfactory answer, especially to such as make the objection ; but then, say the adepts, it is the only answer that becomes us to give ; we do not aim at the conviction of these sort of people, we are not desirous of making a noise in the world, we do not even regard the possession of riches, and long-life, as blessings in themselves ; further than that they enable us to do good, and the sole reason of our ever mentioning such secrets being in our possession, is in order to lead to our society such worthy persons as deserve to be associated. Now, however weak, however sophistical, this reasoning may appear to the generality of mankind, yet, upon the principles of the hermetic philosophy, it must be allowed to be extremely plausible, and in all such cases we must admit men to argue from their own principles, and not from these we lay down.

THE truth of the affair is, that the matters of fact we meet with, sprinkled, but very sparingly, in the works of these hermetic writers, are so astonishing, and at the same time are told with such an air of confidence, that if we entertain the least doubt of their veracity, we cannot help arraigning them of the highest degree of impudence. They speak of all mankind as infinitely below them ; for in comparison of the adepts, monarchs themselves are poor ; the most learned are mere fots and block-

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heads ;

heads; and those who are venerable from their age and grey hairs, are but children. It is impossible not to read such books under strong prejudices, and these are so much the greater from hence, that such astonishing facts are not met with in the writings of the lower class of these philosophers, but in those that have the highest credit, and that, to speak fairly, in many other respects, appear to have been men of sense and candour, in the discourses they have written on the nature of metals and other things.

A SINGLE instance will set this in as clear a light as an hundred. We have mentioned more than once, and shall be obliged to mention again, the asge Artepheus, whose writings are very famous among the hermetic philosophers; insomuch, that the noble Olaus Borrichius, an excellent writer, and a most candid critic, recommends these writings to the sedulous perusal of those that would acquire the knowledge of this sublime philosophy, and assures them, that if they read them frequently, it will not be without fruit. Yet in one of these treatises, this writer himself tells us, without either ceremony or circumlocution, that he was one thousand and twenty-five years old when he wrote it^s. A man must
sure

^s One may easily perceive that our author speaks of Artepheus from Mangetus, or some other compiler; but for the reader's satisfaction, I will here transcribe the whole passage from the treatise

ture have an ostrich's stomach that digests this, and yet without digesting it; one can have no opinion of any thing this writer says, who, in other respects, is very far from being despicable in point of science, and upon whose authority the learned friar Bacon, who, if I mistake not, is the first European writer that quotes him, seems to rely, and therefore could not be scandalized even at this stupendous story of his age, whatever we, who are unacquainted with hermetic secrets, may think of it.

It is very possible that the inquisitive reader would be glad to know something of the history of

tise of that hermetic philosopher, which will set this point in a clear light. “ Know assuredly, says he, I am not at all envious as others are, he that takes the words of the other philosophers according to the ordinary signification and sound of them, he doth already, having lost Ariadne's thread, wander in the midst of the labyrinth, and hath as good as appointed his money to perdition. But, I Artephius, after I had learned all the art and perfect science in the books of the true speaking Hermes, was sometimes envious as all the rest; but when I had by the space of a thousand years, or thereabouts (which are now passed over me since my nativity, by the only grace of God Almighty, and the use of this wonderful fifth essence) when I say, for so long time, I had seen no man that could work the mastery of Hermes, by reason of the obscurity of the philosopher's words, moved with pity, and with the goodness becoming an honest man, I have determined in these last times of my life, to write all things truly and sincerely, that thou mayest want, or desire, nothing to the perfecting of the philosopher's stone.”

so extraordinary a personage; where he led, and how he bestowed so long a life. But, in this, it is by no means easy to give him any tolerable satisfaction. His writings, so far as we are able to judge about them, seem to have been composed about the beginning of the twelfth century; but who he was, or how he acquired his knowledge, farther than that he had one Bolenus for his master, has not been hitherto so much as guessed at. The language in which he wrote was Latin, and that none of the coarsest, so that his treatises are far from being inelegant, with respect to the manner in which they are composed, as, on the other hand, they have a wonderful plainness and perspicuity in their matter; but as to the method by which he prolonged his life, which after all, to one who is not in search of the superior mysteries of the hermetic philosophy, is the point that he would wish most to see explained; it is not covered with impenetrable obscurity, and therefore we will dismiss this point, with giving the best account of it we can, and the rather, because it will be found to have a very close relation to the subject of this very treatise, and cannot consequently be considered as an useless, or an impertinent digression ^b.

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^b It is plain, from this paragraph, that our author had consulted only that treatise of Artephius, which is printed in the fourth volume of the *Theatrum Chemicum*, and in the first volume of Mangetus's great collection; for it is in that treatise that he mentions

HE is said to have invented a magnet peculiarly adapted to the attraction of the aura, or spirit of human life ; so that by the application of this he deprived young men of their lives ; and provided a volatile vivifying tincture, by which he survived to a vast age ; when growing tired of life, he included this tincture in a vessel, and withdrew into a tomb, where he only received so much of it by his nostrils as kept him alive, and in this state he was when, out of pure kindness to the young students in the hermetic science, he wrote those treatises, which are yet so famous, and of which John Pontanus says, that they are the only pieces relative to this mysterious art, by which its secrets may be known without the help of a master. This tincture seems to come so near to the method of our Hermippus, that one might be tempted to think it the same, or that Hermippus might possibly be an hermetic philosopher, and borrow his secret from that of Artephius.

BUT as I hold it a rule not to be dispensed with in works of this nature, for a writer to offer nothing to the world in the way of argument, which has not the same weight with himself, that he wishes it might

mentions his master Bolenus ; but the book from whence I have given the passage in question, which, in some measure, justifies this hermetic sage, is entitled *Liber Secretus*, and is not in either of those collections,

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have with his reader; so I must ingenuously confess, that I do not lay any great stress upon this account of Artephius; that is to say, I conceive the magnet by which he extracted this tincture from the vital spirits of young men to be enigmatical, and I am the rather induced to believe this, because I find many things of a like nature in his works, and have likewise observed, that other hermetrical writers interpret them in this manner as well as I; and if so, I should not deal candidly to produce his authority, in a literal sense, in favour of this notion. Yet notwithstanding this, and though I freely own that I am not able to explain his enigma, there is still this use to be made of it, that undoubtedly he would not have made use of such an allegorical description of his tincture, if it had not been very expressive, and therefore, though the art he used might afford him somewhat infinitely superior to the assistance that may be derived from the breath of young men; yet much might be performed, though in a lower degree, by a medicine of that nature suggested by the literal sense of his words; neither am I inclined to assert that Hermippus was an hermetic philosopher; and that for two reasons; first, because he seems to have made no secret of his method, as all that fraternity do; and next, because notwithstanding he prolonged his life between thirty and forty years beyond the common period, which is a thing extraordinary in itself, considered in a natural light, yet it is, in effect, little or nothing, when

compared with the pretences of the adepts in the hermetic science ⁱ.

I SHALL

ⁱ It seems to me, that after all our author has said about Arzephilus, an inquisite reader will still be glad to know more. The character he has given of this famous sage, is such a one as might be expected from a person who, though he does not care to censure such a body of men, for they are much more numerous than the world imagines, yet is far enough from confiding in them; and therefore we will produce the sentiment of one who professes himself an adept, which, I flatter myself, will at least gratify the reader's curiosity, though very possibly it may not gain his belief. It is contained in a kind of epistolary preface, that stands before that treatise of his, which is printed in the *Theatrum Chemicum*.

“ I John Pontanus have travelled through many countries,
“ that I might know some certainty of the philosopher's stone;
“ and going through, as it were, all the world, I found many
“ false deceivers, but no true philosophers; yet continually
“ studying, and making many doubts, at length I found the
“ truth: But when I knew the matter in general, I yet erred
“ two hundred times before I could attain to the true matter
“ with the operation and practice thereof. First, I began to
“ work with the matter by putrefaction nine months together,
“ and I found nothing: then I put it into *Balneum Mariæ* for
“ a certain time, and herein I likewise erred: afterwards I put it
“ in the fire of calcination for three months space, and I
“ wrought amiss. I tried all kinds of distillations, and sublimations, (as the philosophers Geber, Archelaus, and all the
“ rest, either say, or seem to say) and I found nothing. In
“ sum, I assayed to perfect the subject of the whole art of alchemy, by all means possible to be devised; as by dung,
“ baths, ashes, and other fires of divers kinds, which are yet
“ all found in the philosopher's books, but I found no good in
“ them.

I SHALL have occasion, more than once, hereafter to mention some curious medicines, taken notice of in the works of some of these sages, which will not discredit what I have advanced in regard to the tincture of Artephius. But after all, there cannot be any thing more difficult than to comprehend what

“ them. Wherefore I studied three whole years in the books
 “ of the philosophers; especially in Hermes alone, whose brief
 “ words do comprehend the whole stone, though he speak obscurely of the superior and inferior, or that which is above,
 “ and that which is below, of heaven and earth. Therefore
 “ our instrument, which bringeth the matter into being, in the
 “ beginning, second, second, and third work, is not the fire of
 “ a bath, nor of dung, nor of ashes, nor of the other fires, which
 “ the philosophers have put in their books: What fire is it
 “ then which perfects the whole work from the beginning to
 “ the ending? Surely the philosophers have concealed it. They
 “ that shall read Geber, and all the other philosophers, though
 “ they should live an hundred thousand years, could not comprehend it, because that fire is found by deep and profound
 “ meditation only, and then it may be gathered out of books,
 “ and not before. And therefore the error of this art is not
 “ to find the fire which turns the whole matter into the true
 “ stone of the philosophers. And therefore study upon it, for
 “ if I had found that first, I had never erred two hundred times
 “ in my practice upon the matter: Wherefore I do not marvel,
 “ if so many and great men have not attained unto the work.
 “ They do err, they have erred, they will err, because the philosophers have not put the proper agent, save only one, which
 “ is named Artephius, but he speaks for himself, or by himself;
 “ and unless I had read Artephius, and felt him speak, I had
 “ never come to the compliment of the work.”

these

these people would be at ; and to me it seems full as easy to penetrate all their mysteries, and become one's self an adept, as to know with certainty what they would be willing the world should think about them. In all their treatises, they fail not to magnify the excellence of their own science, and the superiority of their own lights. An adept, if we will take their words for it, is in absolute possession of health, wealth, and wisdom. He is free from almost all the inconveniencies which the folly of our first parent brought upon his unhappy posterity ; and is able to pass through the wilderness of this world, not only without hurt, but without being exposed to any of those evils that afflict other men. Yet turn the tables, and their own works shall shew these very sages in quite another light. If possessed of an universal medicine, they are obliged to conceal it, because, otherwise, they would be made known, and discovered by its effects ; if it is really in their power to transmute metals, and consequently to possess whole mountains of gold, they are, nevertheless, constrained to embrace a kind of voluntary poverty, to prevent themselves, and their art, from being enslaved by the avarice of other men. If to live as long as Artephius was in their power ; yet they will tell you that the crosses which they experience are, generally speaking, such as discourage them from taking the benefit of their wonderful secret, so that it seems more eligible to them to submit to the common sentence of mankind, and that

too at the common time, than to escape it, though this be in their power. On a slight view of these apparent contradictions, most people are apt to conclude all the panegyrics on themselves and their art stark fiction, and have considered their relations as mere philosophic dreams, with which, after amusing themselves through their whole lives, they are desirous also of amusing the world.

WHAT they offer in answer to this has been already shewn, and I think affords such an objection to this way of solving their high pretensions, by supposing them enthusiastic fictions, as is not easily to be got over. For supposing all they say to be true, it cannot be denied, that they must stand exposed to all those difficulties and dangers of which we find so many pathetic complaints, and the consideration of this will appear to any candid enquirer, a sufficient reason to doubt whether, after all, we can pronounce with any tolerable certainty, that their pretensions are so chimerical as is generally imagined. We may perhaps shoot as wide of truth in believing nothing, as in believing all, and in this, as in most other things, there may be perhaps a middle way found, much less liable to exception than either of the extremes. Yet here again the question recurs, which is this middle way? If we do not take for granted all that they say of themselves, or if we do not reject indiscriminately all that they advance, by what rule are we to distinguish what we are to

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receive,

receive, and what we are to reject? What philosophic sieve shall we make use of to separate the wheat from the bran, and from such a monstrous heap of contradictions, to pick out something that may be worth the knowing or believing.

As I do not profess myself either an adept, or so much as a student in this sort of philosophy, I shall take the liberty, as the matter of fact nearly concerns the subject of which I am treating, to shape out another answer to this objection; and it is this, that perhaps we are not always so secure, as to the deaths of these virtuosi, as we imagine. The continuance of their lives is a thing, that though they boast of in one sense, yet in another they studiously affect to conceal. Of this I shall give an extraordinary instance, which will be so much the more entertaining to the reader, as, for any thing I know, it has not yet been taken notice of by any writer upon this subject, not even by the professed historian of this fraternity, notwithstanding he has made larger collections concerning them, and their philosophy, than any man that ever set pen to paper. This instance will be also found the more extraordinary, since I take it from one who never pretended to be an adept, and who therefore ought to be considered as an unprejudiced witness. But before I enter upon this story, I must desire my readers to observe, that I lay down barely facts as I find them, and do not pretend to interest myself

self in the least, as to the credit they may meet with.

AMONGST the hermetic philosophers, who are allowed to have attained the highest secrets of science, Nicholas Flamel of Paris has been always reckoned one of the most considerable, and his right to this reputation, the least to be contested. The history of this Flamel, who flourished in the XIVth century, is very curious: he was a person of a good family, though much reduced in point of fortune; had quick parts, a lively wit, and, with the advantage of no more than an ordinary education, was sent to Paris to get a living as he could. Flamel wrote an extraordinary good hand, had some notion of poetry, and painted very prettily; yet all these accomplishments raised him no higher than a hackney clerk, in which condition he worked very hard, and had much ado to pick up a subsistence. In 1537, chance threw in his way a book of hermetic philosophy, written by one Abraham, a Jew, or rather engraven on leaves made of the bark of trees, and illustrated with very curious pictures, in which the whole secret was laid down in the clearest manner possible, to such as were acquainted with hermetic philosophy. This treatise cost Flamel no more than two florins, for the person who sold him the book knew nothing of what it contained; and Flamel himself, though he made it his whole study for twenty years, and though he took the precaution
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of copying the pictures, and hanging them up in his house, and asking the learned their opinion about them, was able to make very little of them ^k.

TIRED at length with so vain and so laborious a study, he, in 1378, took a resolution to travel into Spain, in hopes of meeting there with some learned Jew, who might give him the key to the grand secret; that this journey might not appear to be undertaken on quite so chimerical a motive, he made a vow to go in pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella, a practice frequent in those times. After much search, to little purpose, he met at last with a Jew physician at Leon, who had been lately converted to the Christian religion, and who was well versed in this kind of science: this man, at the persuasion of Flamel, consented to go with him to Paris; but when they were got as far as Orleans, the physician, who was far in years, and little accustomed to the fatigue of travel, fell sick of a fever, which

^k The best part of this account of Nicholas Flamel, is taken from his article in a very curious book, which, as it deserves to be more known than it is, encourages me to set down the title thereof at large, which runs thus: *Trésor des Recherches et Antiquitez Gauloises, réduites en ordre Alphabetique, et enrichies de Beaucoup d'origines, épitaphes, et autres choses rares et curieuses, comme aussi, de beaucoup de mots de la langue Thyoise, ou Theuthofranque.* Paris 1655, in 4to.

carried him off in a few days ¹. Flamel having rendered the last kind offices to his dying friend, returned very disconsolate to Paris, where he studied three years more, according to the instructions he had received from the physician, with such success, that on the 17th of January 1382, he made projection on a large quantity of mercury, which he changed into fine silver, and on the 25th of April following, he transmuted a vast quantity of mercury into gold. He afterwards repeated frequently the experiment, and acquired thereby immense wealth. He and his wife Perenella, in the midst of all these riches, lived still in their old sober way, and eat and drank, as usual, out of earthen vessels. They maintained however a vast number of poor, founded fourteen hospitals, built three chapels, and repaired and endowed seven churches. In short, the acts of charity they did were so astonishing, that Charles the VI. who was then upon the throne, resolved to enquire how they came by their wealth, and sent for that purpose M. de Cramoisi, master of requests, and a magistrate of the highest reputation for probity and honour, to examine into their circum-

¹ As the history of Flamel was collected long after his death, it is very possible that there might be some mistakes committed in relation to the circumstances attending his adventures; but there is one thing which I think proves the reality of the story beyond dispute, which is, that this very book of Abraham the Jew was actually in the hands of cardinal Richelieu, as Borel was told by the count de Cabrines, who saw and examined it.

stances; to whom Flamel gave so satisfactory an answer, that no further enquiry was made about them; but the honest old people were left in possession of the only privilege they desired, which was no greater than that of doing all the good that lay in their power ^m.

THE circumstances of this story, the immense wealth of Flamel and his wife, their many foundations, their vast endowments, and the prodigious estate they left behind them, are all facts, so well attested, that no dispute can be raised about them; or if there were, the last will of Nicholas Flamel, which, with forty authentic acts, of as many charitable foundations, that are laid up in the archives of the parish church of St. James, in the Butchery at Paris, are proofs capable of convincing the greatest infidel. This Flamel wrote several treatises on the art of chemistry; but they are extremely obscure, because they are all delivered in an allegorical way, and consequently one may hit upon various interpretations, without coming at the true one;

^m This too is a fact out of dispute, and as a proof that Flamel drew his riches from an acquaintance with the hermetic philosophy, the hieroglyphic pictures upon his tomb are usually, and I think very justly cited, as well as the treatises he wrote upon this subject, particularly the following work of his, *La grand eclaircissement de la pierre philosophale, pour la transmutation de tous métaux*, par Nicholas Flamel, in 8vo. Paris, 1628.

which, it is said, he gave to a nephew of his, and that the secret remained long in the family, nay, it is owing to indiscretion, if it does not so still ⁿ. I must not, however, conceal an attempt that has been made to overturn the whole of this history, not by denying the facts, for that would have been ridiculous, since there are hundreds of poor that yet subsist on Flamel's, and his wife's foundations, and are consequently so many living witnesses of the veracity of that part of the relation.

BUT the thing attempted is, to give another account of Flamel's acquiring his wealth, and in order to this they tell you, that he was a notary public at the time the Jews were expelled France, that they deposited with him in trust a great part of their wealth, and that he kept it for his own use ^o. Such
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ⁿ Flamel left his secret to the family of Du Perrier, the last of which was a physician of that name, amongst whose papers it was found; I mean only part of the powder, by one Du Bois; who, having acted very imprudently in making projection before several persons, and pretending to much greater knowledge than he really had, brought upon himself an unfortunate end, being hanged by order of cardinal Richelieu.

^o This story, as far as I am able to learn, was first ushered into the world by Gabriel Naudé, a warm and angry writer, and one far from being exact; from him it is copied by George Hornius, in his preface to the works of Geber, and by many other writers. But as to the notoriety of the fact, with respect to the
banishment

as treat what has been said of the philosophers stone, and of hermetic philosophy, as a fable, have run away with this explication, as if it had been a clear and satisfactory account of the matter, without considering that it is in truth attended with greater difficulties than the tale of the transmutation. For what probability is there that persons of so much worth and piety, as Flamel and his wife are allowed to have been, should be guilty of such a flagrant act of injustice, as to betray the trust reposed in them, and this purely to do acts of charity? If, indeed, they had lived in luxurious plenty, and had rioted in all the pleasures which their immense wealth might have enabled them to have indulged, the story would have deserved some credit; but to imagine that two sober people, leading a life of the utmost frugality, and expending all their revenues for pious and charitable purposes, should contrive to get the money so spent, by base and fraudulent means, is utterly incredible. Besides, if this had been the case, it is impossible to account for two circumstances; the first is, that the king of France should be satisfied with the account that Flamel thought fit to give to Cramoisi; the other, that this story should never break out during the life of

banishment of the Jews, as all the French historians agree in it, and in the dates relating to it, one may safely conclude that it is fully answered.

Flamel, or within an age after his death. But as I know there are people who, to avoid being suspected of credulity, will swallow any thing opposite to what they think it would be a shame to believe, I shall destroy this scandalous history of Flamel's riches by an argument, that even these people dare not discredit. In short, the Jews have been twice expelled France, first in 1180, long before Flamel was born, and again in 1406, several years after all his endowments were made, and but seven years before the death of him and his wife Perrenella ^p.

BUT methinks I hear some captious reader cry out, what did Flamel and Perrenella die ? to what end then all this tedious story ? what is there in Flamel's life that corresponds with that of Hermippus ? or what has alchemy to do with the breath of virgins, or the prolongation of human life ? Peace a little ; I promised you some account of Flamel that has not been hitherto regarded, that has escaped the notice of all who have written the history of hermetic philosophers, from the noble Olaus Borrichius, down to abbé du Fresnoy, and this I am going to give you. But permit me to observe, first, that

^p If the reader has a mind to be better acquainted with the adventures of this adept, he may consult the history of hermetic philosophy, published lately by the abbé Lenglet du Fresnoy.

my account is taken from the travels of the *Sieur Paul Lucas*, who, by order of *Lewis XIV.* passed through Greece, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Africa, in search of antiquities, who dedicated this book of his to that prince, and who must be therefore presumed to relate what was true, or what he took to be true ; for no body, who knew the character of *Lewis XIV.* can imagine he would suffer a fellow to usher his falsehoods into the world under the sanction of his name ; much less, that after being guilty of such a piece of insolence, he should encourage, protect, and employ, such a man, as, in fact, he did to the very end of his reign ; and this in consequence of the reputation he acquired from the publication of the voyages, the authority of which I am going to use ¹.

It may not be amiss to put my reader in mind, that I have strictly kept my word. The *sieur Lucas* was no hermetic philosopher, no chemist, no deep student in the sciences ; and, if we guess from his writings, no man of art or address ; but a bold, rough, free spoken traveller, who had seen much, and was willing to tell the world all he had seen. If, from hence, any should be led into an opinion that he was a credulous man, and might

¹ See the preface to the book from which this story is taken, which is entitled ; *Voyage de *Sieur Paul Lucas*, fait par ordre du roi dans la Grèce, &c.* Amsterdam, 1714, in 12mo. two volumes.

be easily imposed on, I have nothing to say to that; I do not intend to turn advocate for the solidity of a traveller's understanding, any more than for the truth of hermetic philosophy. I only lay down things as they are, or at least as they appear to be, and leave all the rest to the reader's decision. All I insist upon, as to the *sieur* Lucas's relation, is this, that he could not be deceived as to the matter of fact; he could not dream the story he has told us; he could not see it in a vision; and as to the rest I do not concern myself about it. He might possibly be cheated by the Mohammedan monks, for I can readily conceive, that monks of all religions are the same; and yet if as great absurdities, and much greater difficulties attend the story in that light than in any other, I presume it may justify a hint, that it is not impossible it might be otherwise, than such severe critics may incline to believe. But it is no time to come to the story, and therefore I shall put an end to my reflections.

He informs us, that being at Broussa, in Natolia, and going to take the air towards a little village called Bournous Bachy, at a small distance from thence, in company with a person of distinction, he met with the following adventure, which I shall relate to you exactly in his own words ^r. We went
together

^r It is somewhat remarkable, that since the publishing the first edition of this work, we have discovered a very singular illustration

together to a little mosque, says he, where one of their most eminent Dervises was interred. It is always a Dervise that has the custody of such places, which are, generally speaking, pleasantly situated, adorned

tration of this story, from the works of an author of unquestionable integrity, and with whom there is no great reason to believe this French traveller could be at all acquainted. This author is Sir Paul Rycant, who, in his State of the Ottoman Empire, gives the following account of the sepulchre, and the mosque, mentioned in the text, in terms which very much corroborate some circumstances of this extraordinary relation. State of the Ottoman Empire, b. 11. cap. 20.

“ In the time of Orchanes the second, king of the Turks,
“ who governed thirty-five years, and reigned eighty-three,
“ and died in the hegira of Mahomet seven hundred and sixteen, there lived in Prusa, then the regal seat, a famous Saint, called Herewi, who used to walk up and down, and, as
“ an act of charity, to buy the livers and lights of beasts to feed
“ cats and dogs. He professed poverty and severe mortification, with tears and sighs, which he acted with that fervency, that the angels, leaving heaven, came to be witness of his
“ holy penance. The fame of this moved sultan Orchanes to
“ discourse with him, and to know the story of his past life, which he, smiling, began to recount, and told him that he
“ formerly was a king, derived from the line of Mahomet, had
“ compassed with his arms the rivers of Nilus, Euphrates, and
“ Tigris, had governed provinces with his sword and scepter, had been triumphantly adorned with precious stones, and
“ glittering arms, and had made the world tremble at the very
“ mention of his name. But, at last, considering the vanity
“ of this world, he resolved on a solitary life, and to renounce
“ all the follies, and small satisfaction of riches and empty honours. At which saying, sultan Orchanes was amazed, and
said,

adorned with gardens and fountains, and on that account, set a-part for public walks, and places of recreation. We were quickly introduced into a little cloister, where we found four Dervises, who received us with all imaginable civility, and desired us to partake of what they were eating; we were told, what we soon found to be very true, that they were all persons of the greatest worth and learning. One of them, who said he was of the country of the Uzbeks, (a tribe of Tartars) appeared to me more learned than the rest, and I believe verily he spoke all the languages in the world. As he did not know me to be a Frenchman, after we had conversed

“ said, we ought not to despise those who, under the guise and
 “ appearance of mad and distracted persons, wander through
 “ the world; for their virtues are rare, and in this man, particularly, I discover so much of sanctity, that I judge myself
 “ unworthy of the name of one of his servants. And this is
 “ the reason why fools and frantic people have ever since been
 “ had in honour and reverence amongst the Turks, as those
 “ whom revelations and enthusiasm have transported out of the
 “ ordinary temperament of humanity.

“ This Herewi was very learned and experienced in chemistry, and on those who professed his order, and entered into
 “ the regular life of his religion, instead of aspers, he bestowed
 “ gold. He wore a green vest, and lived very abstemiously,
 “ he mended his own cloaths, and dressed the diet for his convent. He endowed many mosques, and several hospitals of
 “ charity, at Grand Cairo and Babylon. His sepulchre is at
 “ Prusa, which is greatly visited by pilgrims, and adorned by
 “ the bounty and munificence of those who reverence the memory of this holy Santon.”

some

some time in the Turkish language, he asked me if I could speak Latin, Spanish, or Italian. I told him, that, if he pleased, he might talk to me in Italian; but as he soon discovered, by my accent, that it was not my mother tongue, he asked me frankly what country I came from. As soon as he knew that I was a native of France, he spoke to me in as good French as if he had been brought up at Paris. How long, Sir, said I, did you stay in France? he answered me, that he had never been there, but that he had a great inclination to undertake the journey.

I DID all that lay in my power to strengthen that resolution, and persuade him to it, in order to which, I told him, that there was no kingdom in the world more polished; that strangers, especially, were extremely well received there, and that without question he would meet with the greatest satisfaction from this journey. No, no, returned he, I am not in such a hurry to make it, I should be a fool to flatter myself with any such hopes; I am one of the sages, and I know that is enough to hinder me from enjoying quiet there, so that I am not like to think any more of the matter. I took a great deal of pains to convince him that he was deceived, that some bad people had given him ill impressions of my country; that France, on the contrary, was the very nursery of the learned; and that the king, whose subject I had the honour to be, was the greatest patron of the sciences. I went further still, I

told him, that though I had not the honour to be of any learned profession myself, yet his majesty was pleased to defray the expences of the travels in which he saw me engaged, and this with no other view than to procure notices of those things, the knowledge of which remained yet necessary for perfecting the sciences ; such as of herbs that might be useful in physic, antient monuments that might contribute to the illustration of remarkable events, and consequently serve to render history more complete ; the view of the countries themselves, in order to the rectifying geographical charts ; in fine, I run through all the proofs I could think of, in order to convince him of the inclination that prevailed in France, in favour of the sciences, and of learning, all which he attributed to the climate, and seemed to approve what I said out of pure civility. At last, however, he seemed to be ravished with the fine things I told him, and went so far as to assure, that some time or other he would certainly go thither. Our conversation being ended, the Dervises carried us to their house, which was at the bottom of the mountain, very near Bournous Bachy, where having drank coffee, I took my leave of them, but with a promise, however, that I would shortly come and see them again.

ON the 10th the Dervise, whom I took for an Usbec, came to pay me a visit. I received him in the best manner possible, and as he appeared to me
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a very learned, as well as curious man, I shewed him all the manuscripts I had bought, and he assured me they were very valuable, and written by great authors : I must say, in favour of this Dervise, that he was a person every way extraordinary, even to his outward appearance. He shewed me abundance of curious things in physic, and promised me more ; but at the same time he could not help saying, that it was necessary that I should make some extraordinary preparations on my side, in order to put myself into a condition of profiting by the lights he was able to give me. To judge according to his appearance, he should have been a man about thirty, but, by his discourse, he seemed to have lived at least a century, and of this I was the more persuaded, from the accounts he gave me of some long voyages he had made.

HE told me, that he was one of seven friends, who all wandered up and down the world with the same view of perfecting themselves in their studies, and that at parting, they always appointed another meeting at the end of twenty years, in a certain city which was mentioned, and that the first who came waited for the rest. I perceived, without his telling me, that Broussa was the city appointed for their present meeting. There were four of them there already, and appeared to converse with each other, with a freedom that spoke rather an old acquaintance, than an accidental meeting. In a long
4 conver-

conversation, with a man of great parts, it is natural to run over abundance of curious topics. Religion and natural philosophy took up our thoughts by turns, and, at last, we fell upon chemistry, alchemy, and the cabala; I told him that all these, and especially the notion of the philosopher's stone, were now regarded by most men of sense, as mere fictions and chimeras. That, returned he, ought not to surprize you, for, in the first place, we ought to suffer nothing to astonish us in this life; the true sage hears all things without being scandalized at them; but though he may have so much complaisance, as not to shock an ignorant person when he talks of these things, yet is he obliged, do you think, to sink his understanding to a level with vulgar minds, because they are not able to raise their thoughts to an equality with his? when I speak of a sage, said he, I mean that kind of man to whom alone the title of philosophy properly belongs. He has no sort of tie to the world, he sees all things die and revive without concern; he has more riches in his power than the greatest of kings, but he treads them under his feet, and this generous contempt sets him even in the midst of indigence, above the power of events.

HERE I stopped him. With all these fine maxims, said I, the sage dies as well as other people. What imports it therefore to me, to have been either a fool, or a philosopher, if wisdom hath no prerogative

tive over folly, and one is no more a shield against death than the other ? alas ! said he, I perceive you are absolutely unacquainted with sublime science, and have never known true philosophy. Learn from me, my friend, such a one as I have described dies indeed, for death is a debt which nature exacts, and from which therefore no man can be exempt ; yet he dies not before the utmost time fixed by his great Creator. But then you must observe, that this period approaches near a thousand years, and to the extent of that time a sage may live. He arrives at this through the knowledge he has of the true medicine. By this means, he is able to ward off whatever may impeach, or hinder the animal functions, or destroy the temperature of his nature. By that, he is enabled to acquire the knowledge of whatever God has left within the cognizance of man. The first man knew them by his reason ; but it was this same reason that blotted them again from his mind ; for having attained to this kind of natural knowledge, he began to mingle therewith his own notions and ideas. By this confusion, which was the effects of a foolish curiosity, he rendered imperfect even the work of his Creator, and this error it is that the sage labours to redress. The rest of animals act only by their instinct, by which they preserve themselves, as at their first institution, and live as long now as when the world first began. Man is yet a great deal more perfect ; but, has he still preserved that prerogative we mentioned, or has he not lost long ago

ago the glorious privilege of living a thousand years, which with so much care he should have studied to preserve? This then it is that the true sages have retrieved, and that you may no more be led into mistakes, let me assure you, that this is what they call the philosopher's stone, which is not a chimerical science, as some half read people fancy, but a thing solid and sound. On the other hand, it is certainly known but to a few, and indeed it is impossible it should be made known to most part of mankind, whom avarice or debauchery destroy, or whom an impetuous desire of life kills.

SURPRISED at all I heard: And would you then persuade me, said I, that all who have possessed the philosopher's stone, have likewise lived a thousand years? Without doubt, returned he gravely, for whenever God has been pleased to favour any mortal with that blessing, it depends entirely on himself to reach the age of a thousand years, as in his state of innocence the first man might have done. I told him, that there had been, in our country, some of those happy mortals that were said to have possessed this life-giving stone, and yet had never extended their days to such a length, as to go with that decrepitude that must attend such an excessive age, into another state. But, continued he, don't you know that the appellation of a philosopher is much prostituted; let me tell you once again, there is none properly such, but those who live to the age I have mentioned.

tioned. At last, I took the liberty to mention the illustrious Flamel, who, I said, had possessed the philosopher's stone, but was dead to all intents and purposes, for all that. At the mention of his name, he smiled at my simplicity. As I had by this time begun to yield some degree of credit to his discourse, I was surprised he should make a doubt of what I advanced upon this head; the Dervise observed this, and could not help saying, with an air of mirth, and do you really think the thing so? do you actually believe Flamel is dead? No, no, my friend, continued he, don't deceive yourself, Flamel is living still, neither he nor his wife are yet at all acquainted with the dead. It is not above three years ago since I left both the one and the other in the Indies, and he is, said he, one of my best friends; upon which, he was going to tell me, how their acquaintance grew, but stopping himself short of a sudden, that, said he, is little to the purpose, I will rather give you his true history, with respect to which, in your country, I dare say, you are not very well acquainted.

WE sages, continued he, tho' rare in the world, yet are of all sects and professions, neither is there any great inequality amongst us on that account. A little before the time of Flamel, there was a Jew of our fraternity; but as, through his whole life, he had a most ardent affection for his family, he could not help desiring to see them after

he once came to the knowlege of their being settled in France. We foresaw the danger of the thing, and did all that in us lay to divert him from this journey, in which we often succeeded. At last, however, the passion of seeing his family grew so strong upon him, that go he would ; but at the time of his departure, he made us a solemn promise to return to us as soon as it was possible. In a word, he arrived at Paris, which was, as it is now, the capital of the kingdom, and found there his father's descendants in the highest esteem among the Jews. Amongst others, there was a Rabbi, who had a genius for the true philosophy, and who had been long in search of the great secret. Our friend did not hesitate at making himself known to his relation, on the contrary, he entered into a strict friendship with him, and gave him abundance of lights. But as the first matter is a long time preparing, he contented himself with putting into writing the whole series of the process, and to convince his nephew that he had not amused him with falsehoods, he made projection in his presence on thirty ocques (an ocque is three pounds) of base metal, and turned it into pure gold. The Rabbi, full of admiration, did all he could to persuade our brother to remain with him, but in vain ; because he, on the other hand, was resolved not to break his word with us. The Jew, when he found this, changed his affection into mortal hatred, and his avarice, flitting all principles of nature and religion, he resolved to extinguish

guish one of the lights of the universe. Dissembling, however, his black design, he besought the sage, in the tenderest manner, to remain with him only for a few days. During this space, he plotted and executed his execrable purpose, of murdering our brother, and made himself master of his medicine. Such horrible actions never remain long unpunished. Some other black things he had done came to light, for which the Jew was thrown into prison, convicted, and burnt alive.

THE Jews fell soon after under a prosecution at Paris, as without doubt you have heard. Flamel, more reasonable than the rest of his countrymen, entered into a strict friendship with some of them; and as his great honesty and unblemished probity were well known, a Jew merchant entrusted him with all his books and papers, among which were those of the Jew which had been burnt, and the book that our brother had left with him. The merchant, taken up no doubt with his own affairs, and with the care of his trade, had never considered this valuable piece with any attention; but Flamel, whose curiosity led him to examine it more closely, perceiving several pictures of furnaces and alembics, and other vessels, he began immediately to apprehend, that in this book was contained the grand secret. He got the first leaf of the book, which was in Hebrew, translated, and with the little he met with therein, was confirmed in his opinion; but

knowing that the affair required prudence and circumspection, he took, in order to avoid all discovery, the following steps. He went into Spain, and as Jews were every where settled throughout that country, in every place that he came to, he applied himself to the most learned, engaging each of them to translate a page of his book ; having thus obtained an entire version, he set out again for Paris. He brought back with him a faithful friend of his to labour with him in the work, and with whom he intended to share the secret ; but a raging fever carried him off, and deprived Flamel of his associate *. When therefore he came home, he and his wife entered together upon the work, and arriving in process of time at the secret, acquired immense riches, which they employed in building public edifices, and doing good to a multitude of people.

* The reader will easily perceive, that there are some variations in this history from that which we have before given of Flamel ; but this only shews that we have not done any thing to countenance this tale, or to give it that air of probability which in truth it wants, and after all, the difference between these accounts is very far from being so great as to destroy the credit of either of them. For it is very probable that Lucas's memory might betray him, and that he might refresh it on his return into France, from the common story of Flamel, with which his agrees. The principal reason of my citing it, was his conclusion, which I particularly recommend to the reader's consideration ; since if Flamel's story be known in those parts of the world with such a degree of exactness, it is little less wonderful than the rest of the story in all its circumstances.

FAME is frequently a very dangerous evil ; but a true sage knows how to extricate himself from all kinds of peril. Flamel saw plainly, that the prevailing notion of his having the philosopher's stone might be fatal, both to his liberty and life ; he therefore bent all his thoughts to the contriving some method for extricating himself out of this danger, and having at last struck out one, he took care to execute it immediately, and found means to secure their flight, by spreading a report of his wife's death, and his own. By his advice, she feigned herself sick of a distemper, which had its usual course ; so that by the time she was said to die, she had reached the frontiers of Swisserland, where he had directed her to wait for him. They buried in her stead a wooden image, dressed up, and that nothing might be wanting to the ceremonial, it was interred in one of the churches that they had founded. Some time after, he had recourse to the like stratagem for his own security, and having buried another wooden image, he, by that time the funeral was over, joined his wife. You will easily perceive, that there was no great difficulty in all this, since in every country, if a man has money, physicians and priests are always at his service, ready to say, or do, whatever he directs them. To give the thing still the better grace, and to prevent the least suspicion of the cheat, Flamel made his last will and testament in form, wherein he particularly desired that his corps might be in-

terred near that of his dear wife, and that a pyramid should be erected to their memories. Since that time, both of them have led a philosophic life, sometimes in one country, sometimes in another. This, depend upon it, is the true history of Flamel and his wife, and not that which you have heard at Paris, where there are very few who have ever had the least glimpse of true wisdom.

THIS story appeared to me what I think it must appear to every one, equally singular and strange, and the more so, as it was told me by a Mohammedan, who, I have all the reason in the world to believe, never sat one foot in France. As to the rest, I report this matter purely as an historian, and I have even passed by abundance of circumstances more remarkable than any I have related; the truth of which, however, he affirmed. I shall content myself therefore with saying, that we are apt to entertain too mean notions of the learning of the Mohammedans, for certainly this man was a person in all respects of extensive knowledge, and a superior genius †.

THE surprise expressed by our author at the knowledge of these people in the hermetic science, appears to be ill founded; for there is no doubt that it is as well, and as generally understood through-

† Voyage du Lucas, tom. i. p. 79—90.

out the East as it is here. Indeed, why should it not, since it is on all hand allowed, that the sages of Europe received it from the Arabs, who are supposed to have had that, as they are said to have obtained all their other learning from the Greeks. It is commonly believed that Geber, who, in the title of his works, is called an Arabian king, was the first of their writers, and he is said to have lived about the beginning of the eighth century. But I have met with another account of this, which is, that Geber was a native of the province of Chorasan, and that instead of receiving his knowledge in this science from the Greeks, he had it from the antient Perses, whose priests and learned men derived it from the writings of their law-giver Zerdûst, who was the Zoroaster of the Greeks, and was the father and founder of the Magi, those antient sages, who are allowed, by all the writers of antiquity, to have been thoroughly versed in all the occult sciences. I mention this, because it seems to give an easier and better account, than any we have yet received of the means by which the hermetic science became diffused all over the East, where, without doubt, there have been, and are many professors of it, even in the remotest parts of the Indies, as well as amongst the Tartars, (no unlettered nation) subjects to the Grand Lama, who, by the way, pretends to be mortal ^u.

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^u This notion of our author shews plainly, that he had made the history of philosophy very much his study, since notwithstanding

IN China again the hermetic science has flourish-
ed many ages ; and, if we will believe the Jesuit
Martini, was known and practised two thousand
years before the Christian *Æra*. However, allow-
ing this to be a mistake, and that the Jesuits have
either been imposed upon themselves, or willing to
impose upon others, in reporting such a story as this,
yet there are two things absolutely certain ; the first,
that they are great pretenders to this science in all
parts of China ; the second, that they had these no-

standing the novelty of his opinion in this respect, it has very
much the appearance of truth. The very learned Herbelot, to
whom we are so much indebted for his oriental library, tells us,
that Geber, who is siled Giabar by all the Eastern nations,
was thought to be a native of Haran, from whence himself,
or his son, was surnamed al Harrani ; that his father's name
was Senan, and that he was supposed to receive his knowlege
from the Zabians, who were a sect so early as in the time of
Abraham. But if we reflect upon the time in which he
flourished, and the authorities there are to prove him a native
of Chorasan, we shall see good reason to prefer our author's sen-
timent, or rather, we shall discern its consistency with the for-
mer opinion ; for, in the East, many conceived Zerdûst and
Abraham to be the same person ; but this is certainly an error,
arising from hence, that Zerdûst, in his own books, professes
to teach the religion of Abraham ; so that, upon the whole,
Giabar, having his philosophy from the disciples of Zerdûst,
may probably make honourable mention of Abraham, in some
of those many treatises of his that are common in the East, tho'
not known to us, and from thence the opinion might arise of
his being the countryman of Abraham, and of the sect of
the Zabians, whom almost all the Eastern writers confound
with the Magi.

tions

tions long before they had any correspondence with the Europeans. Now, I think it is very hard to conceive, that they should derive this sort of knowledge from the Arabians, or from the Greeks, but that they might easily have it from the disciples of Zerdûst, upon the dispersion of the Persees, is not at all incredible, or improbable; for it is very well known, that a great part of these unfortunate people retired into India, at a time when, if we may credit the Chinese historians, they were in possession of a great part of that country, of which some monuments still remain. Neither is it at all unlikely, that some of these people might fly as far as China itself; and either way, the literati of China, might receive these notions from them *. This is a matter which I think has not been hitherto considered, or

* It is a little surprising, at first sight, to find men of great learning make use of the same argument to prove sentiments directly opposite to each other. A very learned writer in France infers, from the prevalence of chemistry in China, that the inhabitants of that empire must have received most of their learning latter than is generally imagined, because we know of no books of chemistry in Europe earlier than the third century. Our author, on the contrary, thinks the prevalence of chemistry among the Chinese, is a proof of the antiquity of their knowledge, and from thence attempts to account for it. As to the matter of fact, they agree, and indeed there is nothing more indisputable, than that the hermetic philosophy prevails more in China, and in the Indies, than even in Germany itself, where a man is hardly thought learned who has not a tincture of this science,

explained;

explained; and therefore I have taken the liberty to commit these remarks to writing, in hopes of giving those who are better acquainted with this subject than I pretend to be, an opportunity of setting the grounds of them in a clearer light, either by refuting what I have advanced, and shewing how this kind of learning came otherwise into China, or by pursuing this enquiry, and supporting it by better authorities than I have met with, though some I could mention, if I did not apprehend it would lead me too far out of my way.

BUT, however, I shall very readily allow, that whatever knowlege the Turks at present have of the hermetic science, they must have had it, as they had all the rest of their learning, from the Arabs; and indeed it is very certain that, as the former translated into their own language the best authors they could meet with in the libraries of all the countries which they had conquered, so the Turks, since they began to affect learning, more especially since the reign of Mahomet II. have translated the best books out of the Arabic, upon this, as well as all other sciences into Turkish, and amongst them not a few relating to this science. Yet it ought to be known, that though the hermetic philosophy was in great credit among the Arabians, as well as very much improved by them; this did not hinder some of the most learned men among them, from treating all notions
of

of that kind both with resentment and contempt. It was the advice of Abou Jouseph upon his death-bed to his children, “apply yourselves to every kind of
“learning to which you have an inclination, for
“your time cannot be better employed, since every
“sort of science is, in some part of life, or other,
“of use, except these three; Astrology, Alchemy,
“and Controversy. Astrology serves only to increase
“the miseries of life, by adding innumerable false
“fears to that multitude of apprehensions which are
“but too well grounded in the sense, that reason
“affords of the vicissitudes of fortune. Alchemy
“leads to beggary by promising riches; we flatter
“ourselves that we are going to a palace, and, in
“reality, we are in the high way to an hospital. Industry is the philosopher’s stone, provided it be
“accompanied with the fear of God. Controversy
“is the warfare of idle men, we doubt and dispute
“till we believe nothing, and by a foolish eagerness
“to search out the sublimest truths of religion, we
“lose religion itself, and travel all our lives without ever coming to our journey’s end. Beware
“then of these false sciences, my children, and
“study what else you will.” It is a custom of the grand signiors never to build a mosque, or erect a tomb, without adding a college in the same place, in which a certain number of Dervises, or Monks, are maintained, and these frequently study the most curious parts of learning, and the occult sciences more
especi-

especially ^y, so that our author had no ground for his surprize, that these sciences should be understood amongst the Mahomedans, but he might very well be amazed at their having any knowlege of the progress of those sciences in Europe, or of the names of their professors, since this was of all others the thing, he had the least reason to expect; for in no sort of learning are the Turks so ignorant, as in that
which

^y In confirmation of what our author has advanced, I will cite a passage from Sir Paul Rycaut's State of the Turkish Empire. "The Eschraki, says he, which signifies illuminated, is a
" sect purely platonical, contemplative of the divine idea, and
" the number in God; for tho' they hold the unity, yet they
" deny not the trinity as a number proceeding from the unity;
" which conception of theirs, they usually illustrate by three
" folds in a handkerchief, which may have the denomination
" of three, but being extended, is but one piece of linen.
" These men are no great admirers of the composition of the
" Alchoran. What they meet therein agreeable to their prin-
" ciples, they embrace and produce as occasion serves in con-
" firmation of their doctrine; other parts, which with much
" difficulty are reconciled to those principles, they reject, and
" stile abrogated, and because they apprehend that the true
" beatitude and blis of paradise consists in the contemplation
" of the divine majesty, they condemn all the voluptuous fan-
" cies and gross conceptions of heaven, which Mahomet hath
" framed, to allure and draw the minds of rude and gross men.
" Of this sect are all the Scheghs, or able preachers, that be-
" long to the royal mosques, or churches, who are men constant
" in their devotions, abstemious in their diet, of a chearful
" countenance, and taking behaviour, great lovers of harmony
" and music, of an indifferent strain in poetry, whereby they
compose

which concerns the history of the western nations ; the reason of which is, that their knowledge, like that of the Arabians, is entirely the fruit of their conquests, and consequently the limits are the same. But with respect to speculative science, the principles of which they have in their own language ; their ecclesiastics, and more especially their Dervises, carry it to a great height, and there are amongst them as great metaphysicians, as any of the disciples of Malbranche, Leibnitz, or Wolf, whatever vulgar notions may teach to the contrary.

“ compose certain songs in metre, for entertainment of their
“ auditory. They are likewise generous, and compassionate of
“ human frailty, and are not covetous, stoical, or conceited of
“ themselves, by which means their behaviour is rendered ex-
“ tremely agreeable, through all Constantinople. They are
“ greatly delighted with an ingenious aspect in youth, and
“ from thence gather matter of contemplation on the comeli-
“ ness of the increated beauty : they are addicted to entertain
“ a charitable affection for their neighbour, because, as they
“ say, he is a creature of God, from whom our love is con-
“ verted to the Creator. Their disciples, they procure, as
“ much as possible, to be men of comely and pleasing coun-
“ tenances, and majestic presence, whom they instruct in all
“ the rules of abstinence, gravity, and other virtues, most ap-
“ propriated to their sect. And these, of all sorts of Turks,
“ seem worthy of the best character, whom I compassionate,
“ for not being born in the pale of a Christian church, nor du-
“ ly instructed in the mysteries of Christianity, to which they
“ seem, by their morality and virtues, already to have many
“ previous dispositions.”

WE have now done with the history of Flamel; and if the reader has a mind to know how I bring it to have any connection with my subject, I shall inform him in a very words. According to my sentiments, which are in part founded upon the writings of Flamel himself, the first matter of the universal medicine, the philosopher's stone, or the grand secret of the hermetic philosophers, is taken from the air; and from some of their writings I have gathered, that they were not altogether unacquainted with the secret of Hermippus; so that if this inscription had fallen into their hands, I make no question but they would have pronounced him an adept, and have supported this decision of their's, by giving us an account, in their manner, of his method of performing it *. This account, so far as I have been able to collect it, the reader shall receive in the clearest terms, for I pretend not to adopt their manner of writing, or to hide, in ambiguous allegories, so useful a truth.

* This discovery will be pretty evident to any reader who consults the fourth, ninth, and twelfth pages, of a treatise at the end of Mangetus's *Bibliotheca Chemica*, which piece is entitled, *MUTUS LIBER*, in quo tamen tota philosophia hermetica, figuris hieroglyphicis depingitur ter optima maximo deo misericordis consecratus, solisque filiis artis dedicatus, autore cujus nomen est Altus.

IN some books, written by these sort of philosophers, I have met with various experiments for applying the salubrious particles of the human breath to medicinal purposes; and amongst these, the following seems to be that which best deserves notice, as it shews a wonderful ingenuity, and is, I believe, the single attempt that was ever made to extract the tinctures of living animals, in order to make them enter like other tinctures, into all the uses of physic. “Let there be, says my author, a small close
“ room prepared, and let there be set up in it five
“ little beds, each for a single person. In these
“ beds, let there lie five virgins under the age of
“ thirteen, and of wholesome constitutions. Then
“ in the spring of the year, about the beginning
“ of the month of May, let there be a hole pierced
“ through the wall of the chamber, through which,
“ let there be inserted the neck of a matrafs, the
“ body of the glass being exposed to the cold air
“ without. It is easy to apprehend, that when the
“ room is filled with the breath and matter perspired by these virgins, the vapours will continually pass through the neck of the matrafs into
“ the body of the vessel, where through the coldness of the circumambient air, they will be condensed into a clear water, which is a tincture of
“ admirable efficacy, and may be justly stiled an
“ Elixir vitæ, since a few drops of it, given in the
“ beginning of any acute distemper, resolves and
“ disperses the morbid matter, so as to enable
“ the

“ the animal force to throw it off by indispensable
 “ perspiration ^a. ”

THERE is, in this critical age, so strong a spirit of censure abroad, that I make no question, that this prescription will be treated by many with a degree of ridicule, as a thing absolutely impracticable in itself, and of no considerable efficacy, if it was practicable; but I beg leave to observe, that how successful soever our modern physicians may be, in the cure of some acute distempers, which at the bottom, perhaps, may be no better than removing symptoms; yet they are not over famous in discovering and carrying off the causes of distempers, more especially such as have been of a long continuance, and may be supposed to have produced considerable alterations in the human body. Now as these are generally occasioned by the slow, but constant operation of external causes, so the most rational way of delivering such as labour under them, is by prescribing the constant use of some potent remedy ^b, and why this
 remedy

^a Secreti di Diversi eccellentissimi Huomini, in 8vo. in Milano, 1558. See also Lana: de mot. transpirat. lib. ii. cap. iii. artic. ii. p. 73, 74.

^b This charge of combating symptoms, rather than the disease has been long ago brought against physicians: but we ought to consider, whether in fact this ought not to be rather esteemed a misfortune than a crime; since, generally speaking, it is in reality owing to the impatience of those who are troubled with diseases.

remedy may not be taken from the human body itself I cannot see. The spirit of human blood, tho' disguised under other names, is still given with great success, by some eminent physicians, though it is far from being in the credit now, in which it was formerly; and I believe for no other reason, but because it was often adulterated. That great English philosopher, Mr. Boyle, had this medicine in much esteem, and with very good reason; since he gives us several instances of very great cures performed by it, when administered by himself, or by his directions; out of many I will produce two^c. "I am
" the

Now, in respect to them, these symptoms are the most grievous parts of the disease, and therefore to convince them of his abilities, a physician must begin his cure by removing these, and when this is done, ten to one but his patient thinks himself cured, and looks upon every succeeding visit as a needless enhancing the expence. In short, of all the learned professions, that of physic is attended with the greatest inconveniences, for against death there are no remedies; and where remedies have done a cure, it is very often ascribed to nature, chance, constitution; in short, to any thing but the physician.

^c Hist. sang. human. tit. xvi. The conduct of our author is worth observing, he quotes the authority of Boyle in this case, rather than that of Paracelsus, in whose works he might have found many things more to his purpose; but in this he is very judicious, the credit of Boyle is better, and yet in many cases he only repeats what Paracelsus says, but without hiding or concealing it, for that illustrious person had not only a passion for, but a confidence in truth, and was never ashamed of asserting a

“ the more inclined, says he, to give credit to these
 “ praises of spirit of blood, because, as I remember,
 “ this was the medicine that I made use of in the
 “ following case. A young lady, in whose family the
 “ consumption was an hereditary disease, was mo-
 “ lested with a violent and stubborn cough, that was
 “ judged consumptive, and looked upon by those
 “ that gave her physic, as not to be cured by any
 “ other way, than a seasonable remove from London,
 “ into the French air ; but she was already so far gone,
 “ and weakened, and there remained so much of the
 “ winter, that it was judged she would die before the
 “ season would make it any way fit for her to under-
 “ take so long and troublesome a journey ; but if
 “ she could be kept alive till the end of the spring,
 “ there would be some hopes she might in France re-
 “ cover. On this occasion, being solicited by
 “ some friends of hers and mine, to try what I could
 “ do to preserve her ; I sent her some spirit of hu-
 “ man blood, very carefully prepared and rectified,
 “ to which I gave some name, that I do not well re-
 “ member, upon the use of which she manifestly
 “ mended, notwithstanding the unfriendliness of
 “ the season, insomuch, that about the end of Feb-
 “ ruary, she had gained relief and strength enough to

fact that he knew, or owning from what author he took any
 thing that he had read. In this the dignity of his character sup-
 ported him, and his practice in this respect may be commended
 without bounds, but must be imitated with discretion.

“ venture

“ venture to cross the seas, and make a journey to
“ Montpellier, whence in autumn she brought home
“ good looks and recovery.

“ If I much misremember not, the same spirit of
“ blood made very pure and subtile, by the help of
“ a lamp furnace, was the medicine that I put into
“ the hands of an ingenious and successful physician,
“ who complained to me, that he had a patient that
“ had quite puzzled him, as well as baffled the en-
“ deavours of other eminent doctors, whom the dif-
“ ficulty of the case had invited at several times to
“ try their skill upon him. This man was frequent-
“ ly obnoxious to such violent and tormenting fits of
“ the head ach, that he could not endure the light,
“ and was offended with almost every noise, or motion
“ that reached his ears, insomuch, that he was forced
“ to give over his profession, which was that of a
“ taylor : but upon the constant use of the before-
“ mentioned spirit of blood (for the other medicines
“ he took were much inferior to it, and had not be-
“ fore been available) he received such relief, as
“ made him with great joy and thankfulness return
“ to the exercise of his trade, and the physician to
“ whom I gave the remedy for him, told me one
“ circumstance too considerable to be here omitted,
“ namely, that the patient having, by our famous
“ Harvey's advice, been used to bleed once in two or
“ three months, the physician counselled him, not-
“ withstanding his recovery, not to break off his an-

“cient custom; and the patient thereupon sent for
 “the same chirurgeon that had been formerly wont
 “to let him blood, and to complain of the great
 “badness of his blood, but when this chirurgeon,
 “who knew not what had been done to the patient,
 “came to open a vein again, and perceived what
 “kind of blood it afforded, he was so surpris’d
 “that he stopp’d the operation, and ask’d the man
 “with wonder how he came by such florid blood,
 “adding, that it was a pity to deprive him of so
 “well conditioned a liquor.” After giving these
 histories from a person of whose veracity, none that
 know his character will doubt; I shall only add this
 remark, if the spirit of human blood do so much,
 why may not the spirit of human breath, or rather
 the tincture of it, do as much?

WE know so very little of the real efficacy and
 power of medicines, that as we sometimes give them
 to no purpose, so in other cases, they answer pur-
 poses for which they were never given. Petronius^d, a
 person

^d De morbo Gallico, lib. v. cap. i. It is not very difficult to ac-
 count for this operation, and abundance of instances might be
 given of the like. Mr. Boyle tells us, somewhere, that he was in-
 formed by the great Dr. Harvey, of his being sent for to a gen-
 tleman who had a confirmed cataract in one eye, on account
 of some distemper that he was troubled with, for which he pre-
 scribed successfully, and thereby the cataract also was cured, or
 rather dissipated, not only beyond, but quite beside his expecta-
 tion.

person of great honour and credit, as well as an excellent chirurgeon, informs us of a certain person of some rank, who, notwithstanding he had a cataract in one of his eyes, saw enough of the ladies with the other, to bring him into a condition, which nothing but mercury could cure. The method in which it was supplied was by unction, and the issue of the business was truly wonderful; since he not only recovered from the distemper for which he fell under the surgeon's hands, but of the cataract, into the bargain. It is very apparent, therefore, that prodigious things may be done by altering the juices of the body; and it is very possible, that shorter methods may be found out for changing the juices, than hitherto have been mentioned, in case physic was prosecuted in the way of experiment and observation, as if men really meant to improve and perfect a science, not to render the practice of a profession more facile and commodious.

BUT it may be objected, that blood is a thing visible, tangible, and may be treated in whatever man-

tion. The famous Pomponius Atticus being troubled with a disease, which the physician looked upon as incurable, resolved to destroy himself by fasting, by which he became perfectly well. This, however, did not hinder him from persisting in his design, which in that age and country was looked upon as a mark of constancy, with what reason I leave the candid and judicious reader to determine.

ner we think proper ; whereas it is otherwise with breath, and that we might as well pretend to make experiments upon insensible perspiration. I have in some measure treated this point already, by shewing it is a ridiculous thing to insist beyond a certain degree upon the evidence of our senses. We do not commonly imagine, that the cleanest rooms in which we sit, are entirely full, not only of air and æther, but of such a mixture of various bodies that are suspended in both, as that, properly speaking, we are surrounded with clouds of dust, which we draw into our bodies every time we fetch our breaths. Yet a ray of sunshine is sufficient to give ocular demonstration of this, for wherever that ray falls, those motes become visible. All the world is now sensible, that odoriferous bodies have an atmosphere round them, composed of innumerable particles, exhaled by, or abraded from them ; but with equal truth it may be affirmed, that all bodies have such an atmosphere, though not perceptible to every one's senses. Such, for instance, as have an aversion to cheese, perceive it plainly from a peculiar sensation, while others know nothing of it. The same thing may be said of a cat, and even more strongly ; since, except such as have an antipathy, none are in the least sensible of the atmosphere that surrounds them, and which notwithstanding will affect some constitutions, so as to render them faint,

and

and this at a considerable distance, of which we have incontestable evidence *.

IT is a point out of all dispute, that the mineral effluvia at Potosi have such an effect upon those who work in the mines, that if it were not for drinking an infusion of the herb, now called Paraguay tea, it would be impossible for them to work there. This is so much the more credible, as we know that the fumes of white lead have a very strange effect upon the human body, and yet the smell is not very disagreeable. In coal mines, that damp which is of all others most destructive, is called, a pease-bloom damp, because the smell resembles that of pease blossoms, which in a lesser degree is very pleasant. The fume of charcoal will hardly awake those that are asleep, and yet is capable, by its suffocating smell, to lead them to their last sleep; and it has been observed by a very great author, that such as have been

* Our author having touched upon this subject before, is the shorter upon it here, but without doubt it deserves to be thoroughly examined; since if we perfectly understood how to act upon the human body medicinally through its pores, it is not only possible, but highly probable, that some relief might be this way given in apoplexies, and other desperate diseases, where other methods not only fail, but are with difficulty applied. It is upon this principle, that a kind of stomacher has been invented in France as a preservative against this distemper, in which some penetrating remedies are contained; and the news papers tells us that they have great effects.

placed far enough out of the reach of the stench of prisoners, as to any sensible impression on the olfactory nerves, have yet been infected by a malignant and incurable disease from thence, which has carried them off in a few days. We may from hence argue, by a parity of reason, that there may be wholesome, as well as unwholesome fumes; vapours capable of restoring health, as well as of filling men with diseases; but in observing these, we have been less curious, because it is natural in all senses to have a quicker feeling of injuries than of benefits. Yet some of these have been taken notice of, as, for example, in the East-Indies, when mangoes are ripe, such as are in a declining state recover by walking amongst the trees. It is asserted by authors of credit, that consumptive persons in England have recovered by riding or walking in the plains where saffron is gathered, and in all countries the smell of fresh earth has been observed to have a good effect in the like case. All these instances I have given from my memory, and there is no doubt, that upon the bare reading of them, many other, and perhaps stronger instances, will occur to inquisitive persons. ^f.

WE

^f We may add, in confirmation of what our author has advanced in this paragraph, a very remarkable and curious piece of Indian history, in which not only the Dutch writers agree, but which was confirmed to me by a Dutch physician, who had resided long at Batavia, and was very positive as to the fact. The island of Ternate was formerly the Montpellier of that part of the world; and

WE must, however, allow that nothing which has been hitherto said, contributes to the solution of the great difficulty how such kind of subtile, and almost imperceptible effluvia may be collected. In answer to this, we might say, that the method having been clearly and circumstantially described; we refer ourselves to the experiment, which, if found practicable, will decide for, and if not, will as clearly determine against us. However, a few thoughts, which have occurred upon the subject, may not be unpleasant to the readers. It is an easy, and at the same time a very pleasant method, by which that essence is obtained that goes under the name of Bergamot. The rind of the small lemon that affords it, is squeezed between the fingers against a looking-glass plate, which stands over the vessel that is to receive the essential oil, and the zest flying out of the peel being intercepted and condensed by the glass, falls down in drops. We may also observe, in very hot weather, and if there be many persons in a room, their

and those who were sinking under all sorts of distempers in the Dutch colonies were sent thither for the benefit of the air, and generally speaking recovered. But the East India company having reduced the king of this island to such straits, that he was obliged to submit to peace upon any terms they thought fit to prescribe, he was compelled to cut down and destroy his clove-trees, with which that island abounded; since which time the air is become so unwholesome, that the Dutch are obliged to relieve their garrisons there twice a-year.

breath will cause a moisture on the glass windows, which comes nearer to the case in question. It is observed in the Levitical law, that the leprosy not only infected the bodies of men, but was sometimes so violent, as to become visible on the very walls of the house, for which purifications are prescribed. Some indeed have fancied that this was peculiar to that country, or to that people; but we want not instances of the like nature with regard to infections recorded by very credible authors in other countries §. “A pious and learned school-master, says “Mr. Boyle, that ventured to stay in London in the “great plague 1665, and was much employed, as “some friends of mine, that knew him and com- “mended him, assured me, to visit the sick, and dis- “tribute alms and relief to them, went indiscrimi- “nately to all sorts of infected, and even dying per- “sons, to the number, as he told me, of nine hun- “dred or a thousand; and being asked by me about “the infection of other things than walls, he told “me, that being once called to administer some

§ Leviticus xiv. 33. The Jewish doctors in general, and Maimonides the wisest and most judicious of them in particular, confine all that is said of this plague of leprosy to the land of Canaan, in which, if they mean in a miraculous sense, and with respect to the method of purification, there is no doubt that they are right; but as our author says, it is very certain, that in other countries these miserable tokens of the plague have appeared. The instance he mentions is to be found in Bayle's works, vol. V. p. 102.

“ghostly

“ghostly comfort to a poor woman that had buried
“some children of the plague, he found the room
“so little, that it scarce held any more than the bed
“whereon she lay sick, and an open coffin where-
“in he saw her husband lie dead of the same
“disease, whom the wife soon after followed. In
“this little close room they affirmed to him, that
“contagious steams had produced spots on the very
“walls; and when I asked whether he himself had
“seen them, he answered, that he had not, but yet
“was inclined to believe the thing to be true, not
“only upon the score of the relators, but because
“he had observed the like in his own study, which
“being divided only by a wall from some rooms of
“a house, which the owner had turned into a kind
“of a pesthouse, and in which numbers had died;
“in a short time he took notice, that the white wall
“of his study was (since the sickness raged, with-
“out any other cause that he could imagine) ble-
“mished in divers places with spots, like those of
“infected persons.” The steams of the body then
may be collected so as to become the object of sight,
and of our other senses; so that there is nothing
contrary, either to reason or nature, in believing
that insensible perspiration may become the subject
of art; and having made this tolerably clear, we
may now proceed to speak of other experiments,
that, however singular and strange, ought not to be
thought incredible.

WE have more than once observed, that amongst the followers of Hermes, there are several ranks or classes, and each of these are possessed of particular secrets; for none but the superiors, who are generally stiled adepts, know how to prepare that exalted essence, by which life is preserved for many centuries. Amongst these lesser secrets, Paracelsus taught his followers one, which ought by no means to be slighted, and this was, that of procuring, by art, a total renovation of vigour, like that of the old man at Tarentum, or the abbess before-mentioned. In order to comprehend this clearly, we must take a view of the principles upon which all such preparations are comprehended, and they are these. The Creator, in the opinion of these philosophers, has fixed in every being a seed for its multiplication, not excepting metals themselves; and that in this seed lies concealed a small spark, which animates and directs the seed to form only the particular kind of being, peculiar to its own species. This little spark of life, or animation, assigned by nature, is the more firm, or permanent, as the life of the being is required to be more constant; and therefore every thing, which is produced out of the seed, is to be assigned chiefly to the aura, or animating spark thereof. Hence therefore they conclude, that the *primum ens* is to be separated by the art of chemistry, by the same medium by which it was communicated; as for example, the *spiritus*
rector

rector of cinnamon, to be extracted with water, by which means they hoped to procure a medicine capable of communicating the same durability to the human body, as is peculiar to the aura of the substance from whence the *primum ens* was prepared^a. Whether any experiment has been made of this or not, I cannot say; but of another medicine of the like kind, by which, if any credit be due to the testimony of one of the greatest physicians in Europe, almost incredible wonders have been done; I shall set down the preparation.

IN the proper season of the year, when the herb is at its full growth, and consequently its juices in their highest vigour, gather, at the fittest time of the day, a sufficient quantity of balm, wipe it clean,

^a The true character of Paracelsus, to speak ingenuously, does no great credit to his writings. He was a man of a disturbed head, a distracted mind, and a dissolute life. Often wild and extravagant in his notions, always rude and brutal in his behaviour, sometimes talking in the stile of an enthusiast, at others, not without a tincture of impiety; in a word, so desultory and unequal, that in one page you find nothing but the dialect of Bedlam, and in the next, you have discoveries that argue a wonderful superiority of genius, and a most amazing penetration. He wrote much, he lived fast, he died a very young man; and if one was to give the character of his writings in a line, it would be this, that upon the first reading, he seems to be a madman, but upon the second we perceive he had lucid intervals, in which he was a very extraordinary person, and had an amazing genius for chemistry.

and

and pick it ; then put it into a stone mortar, and by laborious beating, reduce it into a thin pap. Take this glutinous and odoriferous substance, and put it into a bolt-head, which is to be hermetically sealed, and then place it in a dunghill, or some gentle heat equivalent thereto, where it must digest for forty days. When it is taken out, the matter will appear clearer, thinner, and have a quicker scent ; then separate the grosser parts, which however are not to be thrown away. Put this liquid into a gentle bath, that the remaining gross particles may perfectly subside. In the mean time, dry, calcine, and extract the fixt salt of the grosser parts, separated as before-mentioned, which fixt salt is to be joined to the liquors when philtrated. Take next sea salt, well purified, melt it, and by setting it in a cold place, it will run and become clear and limpid. Take equal parts of both liquors, mix them thoroughly, and having hermetically sealed them in a proper glass, let them be carefully exposed to the sun in the warmest season of the year, for about six weeks. At the end of this space, the primum ens of the balm will appear swimming on the top like a bright green oil, which is to be carefully separated and preserved. Of this oil, a few drops taken in a glass of wine, for several days together, will bring to pass those wonders that are reported of the countess of Desmond, and others ; for it will entirely change the juices of the human body, revive the decaying flame of life, and restore

the spirits of long lost youth. If after the medicine is thus prepared, any doubt be had of its efficacy, or of its manner of operation, let a few drops be given every day in raw meat, to an old dog or cat, and in less than a fortnight, by the change of their coats, and other incontestible signs, the virtues of this preparation will sufficiently appear ^b.

AN objection has been started by a person of very great knowledge in physic, to the efficacy of medicines of this nature. He thinks, that such subtle essences

^b This is the preparation of balm which Mr. Boyle mentions in his works, and in which he tells us, that Dr. Le Fevre, gave him the following account of it, in the presence of a famous physician, and another Virtuoso, to whom he appealed, as knowing the truth of what he said; that an intimate friend of his, whom, says Mr. Boyle, he named to me, having prepared the primum ens of balm, to satisfy himself the better of its effects, made the trial upon himself, and took of it according to the prescription for about a fortnight, long before which his nails, both of hands and feet, began to loosen themselves from the skin (but without pain) which at length falling off, of their own accord, this gentleman keeps yet by him, in a box, for a rarity; but would not pursue the trial any further, being satisfied with what he had found, and being in no need of such physic. But having given of the same medicated wine, for ten or twelve days, to a woman that served in his house, and was near seventy years of age, without letting her know what he expected it should do; her purgationes menstruæ came upon her again in a sufficiently great quantity, to frighten her so much, that he durst prosecute the experiment no further. And when I asked, why he made no trial upon beasts, it was answered, that
though

effences would not fail to alter and change the body into which they were received, so as that it should lose its own, and acquire new qualities; or as he chose to express it himself, if a golden elixir, taken into the body of man, could introduce firmness and durableness, it would no doubt bring along with it fixedness and solidity, so that of a machine, by the help of this chemical remedy, we shall have a statue. It is very strange, that such as charge the hermetic philosophers with arguing loosely, reason in many respects more loosely than they. We find the juices of vegetables act very powerfully upon metals, we find metals act also strongly upon animal bodies; what reason then is there to believe, that a tincture of gold should act upon the body of man, as some think, if fitly prepared, it should act upon baser metals? I say, what reason is there to believe this? and if there be none, it is still less difficult to apprehend the operation of the primum ens of balm. We know by experience, that this herb has many and great virtues, that they may be extracted by different methods, and thereby contribute to cure seve-

though he had but little of the medicine, yet he put apart an old hen, and moistening her food with some drops of it, for a week, about the sixth day, she began to moult her feathers by degrees, till she became stark naked; but before a fortnight was past, she began to regain others, which, when they were come to their full growth, appeared fairer and better coloured than the first, and he added, that besides, that her crest was raised, she also laid more eggs than she was wont.

ra!

ral diseases. Why may not then this wonderful collection of all the primitive sparks of life, in this vigorous plant, being collected and called out by a cause so natural and powerful as the extraordinary heat of the sun, become a medicine of wonderful efficacy, or what is there either irrational or unphilosophical in asserting, that this power would be compounded of the forces of both bodies, that from which it is extracted, and that into which it is taken? have we not daily experience of the operations of mercury, in the very way that I suggest, that is to say, in acting by the weight and subtilty of its particles, as well as by the peculiar and specific qualities inherent in them, so as to produce great changes in the body; but changes conformable to the nature of the body, and not by conversion, either of its solid or fluid parts, into a metallic substance: so that this objection, how plausible soever it may appear, or whatever authority it might borrow from the great reputation of the person who made it, is, when strictly considered, of no weight at all. His argument, if it would prove any thing, would prove too much; and it is a known rule in right reasoning, that what proves too much, proves nothing. There is certainly great folly in believing crudely all that Paracelsus, and Van Helmont, or their followers, say; but perhaps there is no less folly in rudely rejecting all that they advance; and as in other cases, so in this, the middle way is best; we ought to take nothing upon trust either from them, or

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from

from their opponents; for if these men were enthusiasts, with respect to that art upon which they have written, those who have undertaken to refute them, write frequently with such a visible spirit of contradiction, as is as apt to mislead mankind as any sort of enthusiasm whatever. It is indeed true, that partly from the obscurity, partly from the pomp and bombast of their expressions, it is sometimes very difficult to understand their meaning; but, notwithstanding this, even the wisest and best judges have allowed, that there are a great many useful truths in their writings, when thoroughly understood^c. Why then, amongst others, may not this be one of those useful truths?

I COULD mention another preparation from the vital part of the air itself, which is a great secret amongst these philosophers, and is perhaps the white

^c It deserves the reader's notice, with how much facility, as well as dexterity, our author has introduced a great number of additions, without the least prejudice to the method observed in his performance, and without leaving out a letter of what he had published before. If he had thrown these additions into a supplement, they would have been of very little, if of any use; but as they are now ranged in their proper places, they elucidate the subject, strengthen his arguments, and bring a new weight of authorities, to the support of his system. It seems to be now as complete as we can expect a work of this nature, and therefore it may be presumed, that the author, in justice to his own reputation, will leave it as it stands, to the only true test of merit, viz. the judgment of succeeding times.

dove so often mentioned in the writings of Philalethes, of which thus much is certain, that when the air is once despoiled of this principle, it is no longer fit for animal respiration; and it was by a contrivance of this kind, that the famous Cornelius Drebell made that liquor, which supplied the place of air in the machine he contrived for carrying on a kind of submarine navigation. This medicine, which is, as I have said, extracted from the air, is whiter than the snow, colder than the ice, and so volatile, that if a quantity of a nutmeg be exposed to the air, it is absorbed thereby in the space of a few seconds. This secret, which is used for the same purposes as the former, is stiled *Aura puellarum* ^d. We may gather from all this, that if the hermetic philosophers have in reality any such secret as they boast of, for the preservation of human life, it is built upon the same principles with those which I have already laid down, and consequently no true adept can, consistently with his own notion of things, oppose my doctrine, especially when he considers with what restrictions it is offered, since, I do not propose, as the sages do, the

^d Whoever consults the *Liber Mutus*, will plainly perceive, that the first matter is taken from the air; but by a method very different from that which I here suggest, though possibly they may both contribute to the same end, since it is easy to conceive, that the first matter of the philosophers may reside in several places; nay, some of them have affirmed, that it is to be found every where; the famous Jacob Boehmen asserted, that it was to be met with in the dirt of the streets.

prolonging man's life to the term of a thousand years, neither do I promise the renovation of strength, as some meaner artists have done; all I contend for is, the possibility of making such use of youthful spirits, as for a time to keep off the inconveniencies of age, which, though far inferior to what others assert they are able to perform, would still be of the utmost benefit to mankind, if with facility it could be carried into practice.

I KNOW very well it may, and I doubt not but it will be objected, if Hermippus was so wise a man, why, instead of drawing old age to such a length, did he not preserve the vigour of his youth? this surely would have been by far a nobler discovery, and to which the young ladies would with the greatest readiness have contributed. But I must put such people as these in mind, that as in this treatise I have inserted nothing which may not be some way or other serviceable, either to the instruction or entertainment of mankind, so I shall not think myself at all obliged to take notice of any ludicrous reflections. The preservation of life, the defending the human body from decay, and rendering it a fit tenement for the soul to inhabit, in that season in which she is most capable of exerting her noblest faculties, are grave and serious subjects; with which no trivial matters ought to mingle. Besides, to speak my opinion freely, though I think the method of Hermippus extremely proper for repairing the
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the wastes of nature, and preventing the incommo-
dities which usually attend on years; yet I am far
from believing, that this method would contribute
at all to the extention of youth, but rather the con-
trary; and for this, I think, I am able to offer some
very probable reasons.

IN the first place, it will be necessary to observe,
that I do not here mean by youth, a state of infan-
cy or childhood, but rather that robust state be-
tween twenty-five and forty; for the conversation
of very young people with each other, I conceive
to be as wholesome for their bodies, as it is pleasant
and agreeable to their minds. But when the hu-
man body is arrived at its full strength, and is in
that state of health in which temperance and equa-
nimity will maintain it, a surcharge of animal spirits
may not only prove useless, but dangerous. It is an
old, and a very true observation, that the most florid
state of health, is that in which a man is in the
greatest peril, in case he received any infection, and
the reason is obvious, viz. because the animal spi-
rits act then with the utmost vigour, and conse-
quently must do the more mischief, if by any means
they are tainted. From the same method of reason-
ing, we may conclude, that such a manner of living
as that which we have supposed Hermippus led,
might be attended with inconveniencies to a man of
a robust constitution, and perhaps incline him to
frenzies, or at least to fevers. A pure air, light
diet, moderate exercise, and a perfect dominion

over his passions, with a few slight remedies taken on proper occasions, and according as nature directs, may maintain a man in the full possession of health and spirits to sixty, and then it is time enough for him to think of avoiding the inconveniencies which usually attend old age. I might also observe, that the conversation of many young women might, in the summer of life, draw along with it other inconveniencies; but these are subjects on which I do not chuse to insist, because it is not easy to treat them with that delicacy which a philosophic discourse, like this, requires; and because the slightest hint is sufficient to suggest more to a man of good sense, than is at all necessary to be delivered upon this subject. I take it therefore for granted, that I have assigned the proper bounds to remedy, and that I may safely define it, the cordial of advanced years, which can never be safely administered, till from a just application of reason, there has been produced an absolute retreat of appetite *.

BUT if any one should be mad enough to pursue this objection further, and cry out, of what significance then is your remedy? why in such a situation would you extend life at all, or of what use is years when deprived of enjoyments? If I say there are any so wild as to talk in this manner, my answer is, that they mistake my meaning. I am clearly of opinion, that the pleasures of the mind are far superior to all sensual delights, and that the cultivating youthful

* Cicer. de Senectute.

understandings, which is the business in which I have supposed my old man employed, is a pleasant and noble undertaking, every way worthy of the soul's supreme faculties, and carrying along with it its own reward, viz. a second youth, more pleasing, more delightful, than the first. For as on the one hand, I cannot allow that such a person should gratify, or so much as feel his passions, so on the other, I would not have him plunged into deep and perplexing studies, but rather amused and diverted by pursuits of another nature. At particular seasons, indeed, he might discourse with his friends on grave and serious topics; but I would not have such conversations return too frequently, for fear of their leading him by degrees into melancholy, which is nothing else but fixing the thoughts too intently on a single object. In order to acquire and maintain a green old age, there is nothing so requisite as cheerfulness of mind, which can never be secured if we meditate much on abstruse subjects. I do not say, that these are always to be neglected; but what I say is, that this is not the season of life in which they ought to be pursued. They require such vigour, such attention, and such a degree of penetration, as would induce so great a waste of spirits as might defeat the intention of that remedy, which I would recommend, and therefore I lay it down as a supplemental rule, that these are to be avoided.

THERE is, as far as my foresight will carry me, but one objection more, that can be raised against my system; and this must come from the quarter of the politicians, who conceive nothing to be right or worthy of encouragement, which does not square with their notions, which are, however, generally speaking, not very agreeable to those of other men. It would not therefore surprize me, if these gentlemen should take it into their hands, to treat this as a whimsical and trifling performance, because I know that according to their system, old men are so many incumbrances, of which the state ought to be discharged. It is upon this principle I presume, that some Indian nations make great feasts in their families when their chief becomes decrepid, and when these rejoicings are over, fairly put him out of the way^r. Our free-thinkers in politics, therefore, must necessarily have a bad opinion (at least while they are young) of such a proposition as this, which intends no more than prolonging the lives of those
 who,

^r I remember to have read, in a late French writer, that this is practised by some of the barbarous nations, who live in the neighbourhood of Hudson's bay; and he says further, that he was present at one of these feasts, at the close of which, the son cut the throat of his father. I do not recollect, that he bestows any reflections upon this passage; but from the account he has given us of the country, I think it no difficult matter to distinguish the cause of so inhuman (I should be in the wrong to call it
 so

who, in the account of our Machiavelists, ought to be in their graves already. What benefit, say they, can result to society from maintaining people past their labours; and who, according to this very scheme, are declared unfit for propagation? the public is only benefited by active and industrious persons, why then should so much care be taken to preserve people fit only for a sedentary life? if the ordinary laws of nature can be dispensed with, let it be in favour of the public weal; why should the extravagant desire of life be gratified, rather than any other extravagant desire whatever? Reflections like these, it is evident, must induce these over-wise persons to treat my book with contempt, whatever opinion they may have of the arguments contained in it; and therefore it is necessary for me to shew, that these maxims, how plausible, how refined soever they may appear, are very far from being either just or reasonable, and which is still of greater weight in the present case, are far from being calculated for the benefit of mankind in general [§].

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so brutal) a custom, which I take to be this, that they find it very difficult in that part of the world to acquire subsistence, and therefore think themselves under a kind of necessity of maintaining only such as are useful. This, I persuade myself, was the original of so horrid a practice, which cannot, however, be founded on real necessity, because these people who murder their parents, preserve their children, though equally helpless.

[§] It may be, perhaps, thought I exaggerated a little in supposing, that there are people capable of reasoning in such a manner;

IT is, I think, a fact so well established, that I need be at no great pains to prove it, that most of the mischiefs and miseries brought upon private families, and even upon whole nations, flow from the warmth of mens passions, and from their indulging their irregular inclinations at the expence of others, nay, and of society itself. I cannot, therefore, help thinking, that it might be a means of lessening these evils, if we could increase the number of those who are free from such irregular and depraved appetites, and are consequently most capable of conducting

ner; but whoever considers the principles of the Spartan government, and the system of morals, recommended by Lycurgus, will be of another opinion. Neither are we to imagine, that only severe politicians are inclined to such a doctrine; there have been in all ages some polite writers, and refined wits, who have been inclined to treat old age, not as a misfortune only, but as a crime. For instance, Cornelius Gallus, one of the favourites of Augustus, and himself the patron of Virgil, and of Horace, paints old age thus:

Stat dubius tremulusq; senex, semperq; malorum

Credulus et stultus quæ facit ipse timet.

Laudat præteritos, presentes despicit annos:

Hoc tantùm in rectum quod facit ipse putat.

Trembling and doubtful, still the old we find,

And much to credit all ill news inclin'd;

Foolishly fearful of whate'er they do,

And when it's done, they're apprehensive too.

Past'd times their praise, the present claim their spight,

And only what they do themselves is right.

with

with judgment and integrity, either public or private affairs. It is remarkable, that in all well-governed states, a certain maturity of age is required before men are entrusted not only with the management of public concerns, but of their own. Upon what reason then is this founded? Is it not because they are thought to want in the first place, the lights of experience, and in the next, to be too much hurried by their passions? If this be right, and if it be not right, the wisest men in all ages have been in the wrong: If this, I say, be right, why should we fancy men passed their labours; for being in possession of those qualities which are certainly the first ingredients in the constituting true wisdom? There will be always people enough in the world full of that heat, vigour, and strength, which is requisite for carrying on the active and laborious parts of business; but we see plainly, that private families are brought to ruin, and by degrees, great states decay for want of that moderation, experience, and foresight, of which men far in years, and whose spirits are not oppressed with the infirmities of age, are usually possessed. If, therefore, we regard the ease and happiness of mankind, rather than hurry and noise, and esteem such a government, as preserves its subjects in the constant enjoyment of these blessings, better than that which employs them at the expence of their own ease and happiness, in disturbing those of their neighbours, then there can be no weight in this part of the objection. As to what respects generation,
it

it is a very slight and idle surmise; for if in popish countries monasteries are found no great inconvenience, where those that fill them make vows of celibacy in the flower of their age, certainly for men who are turned off seventy to forbear getting children, can never be an inconvenience to any state.

THIS is undoubtedly a sufficient answer as to the general reasoning of those I would refute, but with respect to the doctrine I have endeavoured to establish, a still clearer and more explicit answer might be given. For without enquiring whether their principles be wrong or right, I may easily observe, that nothing I have laid down tends to burthen society with a race of dotards. What I propose, is quite the contrary. If, on the one hand, I plead for the extension of human life, I recommend, on the other, such a method as must preserve the faculties in the highest order. Nor is it to be at all apprehended, that the number of men who shall prolong their lives by this method, in case it should be ever carried into practice, will be excessive, or burthensome to society, the very nature of it provides against any such inconvenience, by requiring such moderation and self-denial, as will not frequently be found. It is, therefore, an unjust and unfair imputation upon my principles, that they tend to burthen the world with useless people, since the utmost to which they can be strained is, that I am for preserving as long as possible, the lives of such as may be useful. As to the
substance

substance again of such people, it is easy to discern, that this can be but a very trifling expence, when compared even with what they are able to acquire towards the increase of the common stock. So that considered in this, which is the very worst light in which the thing can be put, a true politician, and one who has a proper regard for the interest, and, at the same time, a just respect for the rights of mankind, will be far from thinking that I have offered any thing which can be prejudicial to a well-ordered society, but have rather provided a very good method for securing a constant supply of such counsellors, as may preserve it in the best order possible.

On this occasion, I beg leave to cite a passage which Tully hath put into the mouth of the elder Cato ^b, that deserves as much attention from its solidity and good-sense, as it does praise for the beauty and accuracy of style in which it is delivered. Cato is there answering the very objection which I have been treating. “ If, says he, petulance and lust be vices
“ more frequent among young men than old, yet
“ all young men are not infected with them, but
“ such only as want proper talents, so it is with that
“ sort of distemper which you call dotage, it is indeed the disease of old men; but, however, all old
“ men are not infected with it. Appius was for some

^b Cicer. de Senectute, c. ii.

“ years

“ years quite dark, and yet he managed a family
“ of four sons grown up, and five daughters, with
“ abundance of relations and clients, who depended
“ upon him. He kept his mind always in order,
“ and though his vigour decayed, yet his senses ne-
“ ver failed him. He preserved to the last moment
“ his character, and his authority; every body look-
“ ed up towards him as became their station; his
“ slaves feared, his children revered, and all who
“ were about him, loved him. In a word, he kept
“ up the old discipline, and did honour to the
“ Roman name, by preserving the manners of his
“ family untainted. So that it is plain, old age
“ may maintain a graceful superiority, if it be jea-
“ lous of its prerogative; if on all occasions it main-
“ tains its right, if it never sneaks and gives way,
“ but keeps up a manly spirit to the last. For as
“ I approve some qualities of age in a young man,
“ so a youthful spirit is very commendable in men
“ in years, for while they preserve this, though
“ the body may feel the effects of age, yet the
“ mind stands out of its reach. At this very instant
“ I am employed in writing the seventh book of
“ my antiquities, and am actually making large
“ collections from such old records as may serve
“ my purpose. I likewise review, and sometimes
“ touch a-fresh, the orations I have formerly made
“ in the capital causes, wherein I have been con-
“ cerned: I still keep up my stock of knowledge in
“ augurial, pontifical, and civil law, and have time
“ enough

“ enough to read a great deal of Greek besides. I
“ constantly use the Pythagorean method for the
“ exercise of my memory, and every evening run
“ over in my mind, whatever I have said, heard,
“ or done, that day. These are the exercises of the
“ understanding, and in these, as in a chariot, the
“ soul takes the air; while I am capable of these, I
“ don't give myself much concern about bodily de-
“ cays, I am always at the command of my friends,
“ attend the service of the house frequently, and
“ distinguish myself in debates, where a man com-
“ passes more by the strength of his faculties, than
“ he can do elsewhere, by force of arms. But should
“ it ever prove my misfortune to be confined to my
“ bed, and be thereby rendered incapable of go-
“ ing through these employments, yet the very
“ thoughts of what I would do, if I were able,
“ would console me. But, thanks be to heaven,
“ I have no reason to apprehend any such thing,
“ I have been a better husband of my time than
“ so; for let a man be but constantly exercised in
“ labours like these, and he will not so soon find
“ the breaches of age. Years will steal upon him
“ insensibly, he will grow old by degrees, and with-
“ out feeling it; nay, when he comes to break at
“ last, the house will crumble gently, and fall down
“ so slowly, as not to give him any great pain.”
This is a very fine picture, and contains a more finish-
ed apology for that state of life which I am endea-
vouring to extend, than my abilities would suffer me

to draw, but the very producing it serves my purpose better than if I had wrote it. If I follow the sentiments of Cicero, and the example of Cato the elder, who shall question either my sense, or my conduct?

It ought to be further considered, that for perfecting many of the sciences, a longer life is requisite than men usually enjoy; or, to speak with greater propriety, the free exercise of their faculties to a more advanced age. If we examine all the improvements that have been made in true science, we shall find, that they have proceeded from men, who have exercised their thoughts in such kind of studies for a long course of years. The last books of Aristotle are esteemed the most perfect, so are those of Seneca, which he wrote in an advanced age; and we may say the same thing with respect to modern philosophers; such as Gassendi, Bacon, and Newton. A serene old age is therefore of the highest consequence in this respect, since it would contribute to furnish the world with new and useful lights, and prevent the expectations they conceive from the early productions of great men, from being frustrated, as they frequently are, by their premature deaths. I must likewise observe, that mechanical inventions require much time to perfect them, and that very profitable discoveries, and very useful manufactures have been lost, by the death of those who first cultivated them, of which many instances may be given. We may likewise remark, that settling any new plantation;
reforming

reforming a society; or, in short, reducing any people who have been long under an ill form of government, or in a great measure without any, requires length of days. Lewis XIV. changed entirely the face of things in France during his reign, which was principally owing to the length of it, as it gave him an opportunity of seeing most of his schemes brought to bear; whereas the unexpected death of the great Czar Peter, caused many of his projects to be buried in oblivion, and must have overturned the whole of his glorious design for reforming his subjects, and raising the credit of his crown, with the rest of the European powers, if, which was scarce to be expected, his successors had not, generally speaking, persisted in the pursuit of his plan. We may therefore easily discern, that such an extension of life as this treatise proposes, would be so far from contributing to burthen the world with an useless race of old men, that it would really furnish it with such people as are most wanted for the improvement of knowledge, the perfecting mechanical discoveries, and contributing in other respects to the welfare of mankind.

UPON the whole, therefore, I think I may very justly conclude, that by examining this ancient inscription, I have not only exercised my thoughts in a manner that may contribute to the amusement of the learned; but that I have hinted many things
Q which

which may be of public utility. In this respect, indeed, I think, I have made the proper use of the inscription; for certainly, it is much better to inform ourselves as to things than words, and the world would be much more indebted to the labours of learned men, if they would pay that regard to this maxim which it deserves. What use would it be of to mankind, supposing it possible for me to fix the reign of the Roman emperor, under which Hermippus flourished? or what thanks would my readers owe me, if I had endeavoured to discuss whether he lived to an hundred and fifty-five, or a hundred and fifteen only. Have I not chosen the better part, in examining what may still be of some use, viz. by what method he arrived at so great an age, and how far it is practicable for us to follow his method. I think, I may go still farther, and affirm, that I have made it at least extremely probable, that the *anbelitus puellarum* is in some measure the breath of life; in order to which, I hope, I have effectually destroyed some prejudices that affected the minds even of people of good sense, as to the settled term of human life, and the impossibility of prolonging it by art. I have likewise, in the course of this dissertation, collected the sentiments of several great men, who think, or at least seem to me to think, in the same way that I do, and have thereby given an opportunity to the curious and inquisitive reader, of searching

ing more strictly into their opinions, in order to do them justice, in case, after mature consideration, he thinks that I have failed in so doing.

IF this should contribute little to the elucidation of the present point, yet it may prove the means of bringing many things of consequence to light. We have made it evident, by our citations from old books, that many of the discoveries for which the moderns are famous, were actually known to the learned in former times ; whence we may probably conjecture, that some other things were known to them, with which we are not acquainted, and the rather, because there is scarce any country where antient monuments are to be found, but we may discern in them marks of skill and capacity, that transcend the power of modern workmen, and tho' these may not be agreeable to the present taste, which seems to be a handsome expression for the reigning humour of mankind, that changes too often to deserve the name of a rule, yet they still manifest great quickness of invention, and the possession of many arts, that are now lost. It is some credit to antiquity, that the oldest building in the world, which is the temple of Theseus at Athens, is by far the finest ; and in literature again, Homer and Hippocrates plainly prove, that in point of genius, or of industry, the first ages are yet unrivalled. There are several roads which lead to true wisdom ;

we may sometimes reach it by going backwards, as well as forwards, and profit as much by detecting the prejudices of the moderns, as by refuting the errors of antiquity. It is a just observation of the great lord Verulam, that much learning frees us from those mistakes into which we are plunged by having only a little. When first the moderns began to examine the writings of Herodotus, and Pliny, they found nothing but absurdities and improbabilities; but now, that we are better acquainted with experimental philosophy, we begin to have a better opinion of these authors, and are obliged to confess, that in some cases sagacity may supply experience. I am, however, ready to admit, that in some branches of science we have out-done the antients very much; but what of that, we are still far short of perfection. Our very discoveries prove it; for example, we discern the effects of gravity, we see the whole mechanism of the universe depend upon it; but the cause has been hitherto inexplicable. We are well acquainted with the many properties of the needle, which were secrets to former times, but the cause of its variation remains a secret to us. We have, indeed, made some bold guesses at both, and it is not impossible, that posterity may be able to demonstrate our conjectures; as it is on the other hand likewise possible, that they may prove them to be only idle conjectures. If we would avoid being deceived, we must decline bigotry of
all

all sorts ; we must not carry our veneration for the antients too far, and, at the same time, we ought not to be afraid of using a just freedom with the moderns ; since it is not our business to admire others, but to instruct ourselves.

WITH the same view of coming at truth, by setting the subject of which I treat in different lights, I have stated the opinions of others fairly, and have reasoned upon them as freely as I desire to see my system treated. I have given the reader the sentiments of astrologers, and of hermetic philosophers, on this inscription, and have left it to him to decide, whether they are more in the right than I, or whether we may not be all mistaken, and this inscription have at last some other secret, and yet more probable sense than any of us have reached. To encourage an exact discussion of this, I have often inculcated the usefulness of such an enquiry, and, I think, have fully proved without the possibility of a reply, that as it is very practicable to extend the thread of life beyond that length to which it usually reaches ; so this will be a real benefit, and not an idle or trifling discovery. These are the principal points that I have laboured, and to avoid that heaviness and dryness which is commonly complained of in discourses of this kind : I have frequently made excursions for the entertainment of myself and my readers, and have inserted abundance

dance of curious passages from scarce and valuable books, that I hope will make full amends for the trouble of perusing this treatise, even to such as may remain unconvinced of the truth, or practicability of my system. At least, I can say this for my book, and for myself, that nothing has been omitted within the reach of my power, which might render it at once both profitable and pleasant; and therefore, I hope, that if any one shall take the trouble of criticising it, he will at least treat it with that candour and good manners which I have used through the whole, and not with that surly and pendent peevishness which is too often visible in the works of minor critics, who value themselves much more on exposing the faults of other men, than on manifesting any valuable qualities in themselves, and are better pleased to destroy an edifice erected by another, than to acquire a just reputation by raising a better structure of their own.

THERE is one thing more I must remark, and it is this, that my system is entirely on the right side. I have not undertaken to demonstrate as many have done, a paradox in the teeth of common sense, and the common interest of the human species, of which the famous encomium on folly, and the panegyric on drunkenness, are glaring instances; but what I have laid down in this discourse, is, with a view to public utility, and from a desire of doing
good

good; if, therefore, upon thoroughly sifting this dispute, the matter shall come at last to be in equilibrio, I hope the turn of the scales will be allowed me; for surely, if sense be preferable to dotage, ease to pain, or life to death, I have a fair title to this favour. I would not be understood to interest, by this means, the inclinations or prejudices of my readers, on my side, for that might prove detrimental to truth; but I introduce this remark, to secure me against the effects of a petulant humour, which reigns but too much in the world, of disliking whatever has the appearance of novelty, and supposing, that there is something equally just and wise, in maintaining old opinions against new, and running down any system upon its first appearance. Against this unequitable prepossession, in favour of antique notions, I set up this claim to the good will of men, founded on the benefits resulting from my system to the human species, either considered as individuals, or in society. It was upon the same principle, that the late Dr. Harvey established his doctrine of the circulation of the blood, which he justly observed, would exempt the art of physic from many reproaches, and enable us to give a clearer and more rational account of the animal œconomy. On this basis too stands the philosophy of Sir Isaac Newton, which is perhaps the noblest effort of the human understanding. I do not mean, by this, to compare my invention with theirs, or myself to ei-

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ther of those great men. What I design the reader should collect from these remarks, is this, that if in proposing new systems, the wisest and ablest men have desired, that some allowances should be made them; it cannot be wondered, that I should expect also some indulgence, who, in comparison of them, know myself to be but little and weak.

HERE then let me rest this affair, and after taking so much pains to render this work not altogether unworthy the view of the public, or the eye of equal and impartial judges, I resign it freely to their consideration, and depend upon their candour and humanity for the kind acceptance of my labours.

F I N I S.







